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ABSTRACT

Prepared by classroom teachers, the papers in this collection combine practical knowledge with recent findings from writing research. Among the topics discussed in the 25 papers are (1) student teacher conferences, (2) using poetry to develop writing fluency, (3) writing as a learning process, (4) oral and written discourse, (5) creative dramatics and oral interpretation in the writing process, (6) writing for publication, (7) reluctant writers, (8) handling the paper load, (9) popular culture and the teaching of usage, (10) the development of writing abilities, (11) the structure of the expository paragraph, (12) writing in the content areas, (13) journal keeping, (14) using prewriting to improve student writing, and (15) using field work to teach writing. (FL)

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TEACHERS AND WRITERS:
Articles from the Ohio Writing Project

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edited by

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Preface

This past summer, the twenty-five teachers who attended the Ohio Writing Project Institute, from 18 school districts in 8 counties of Ohio, knew much about the teaching of writing, about what works in the classroom, demonstrating an array of inventive techniques and practical solutions to the real-world problems of the writing class. At the same time, however, our teachers sought another kind of knowledge as well--a theoretical framework for their methodology. They recognized that a classroom uninformed by such knowledge could easily degenerate to facile gimmickry without the reason, focus, and purpose that ideas carefully explored, debated, and tested bring. They feared that without an understanding of the issues that have revolutionized how we think about and practice writing and how we teach the process to our students, they could not articulate--to themselves or others--why they do what they do or why it works. They were eager to discover and to understand what Richard Gebhardt has called the "conceptual underpinnings of composition and the teaching of writing."

This collection of essays demonstrates the teachers' confrontation--sometimes willing, sometimes coerced--with the massive research in composition over the last two decades or so. Welcoming sensible, thoughtful theory, derived from without the ivory-tower, derived from research conducted by teachers in touch with the real world of writing instruction, they appreciated the erudition of Britton and Moffett, welcomed the common sense of Irmscher and Hunt, and reveled in the whimsical truth of Elbow. They not only saw presentations on invention, freewriting, sentence combining, Christensen rhetoric, and holistic and analytic evaluation, techniques some had used previously in one way or another, but they also studied the published literature, explored the current debates, and attempted to unravel the controversies attending any theoretical testing-ground. For the five weeks, they embroiled themselves in the "why" as well as the "how" of teaching.

Although wearied at the end of the session, the teachers produced work that indicates their struggles and long hours were rewarded. Some of these essays are traditional research papers, insights gleaned from the public record; others are Macrorie-like "I-search" papers, the fruit of personal discovery, of private revelation. The collection combines the best of both practice and theory, of public and private, forging that "brave new world" that writing teachers who are good, who are thoughtful, must visit daily.

Mary Hayes
Max Morenberg
Janet Ziegler

CONTENTS

Preface v

Teacher-Student Conferencing: A Way to Writing Improvement 1
Tom Romano

Of Minds and Men. 11
Rose Finkelman

Using Poetry to Develop Fluency 16
Pamela Emnett

When Is "Done" Done? 20
Margaret Orlett

I Search for Lively Writing 26
Dorothy S. Birchfield

Writing as a Learning Process 31
MaryBeth Connors

The Composing Process 35
Katherine Kauflin

Oral and Written Discourse: From Talking to Writing. 40
Karen Randolph

Creative Dramatics and Oral Interpretation in the Composing Process . .43
D. Jean Knabe

Writing in Content Areas. 47
Susan Blumenthal

Developing Fluency with the Free-to-Focus Approach. 50
Frank R. Thompson

Writing for Publication 57
Virginia Araujo

The Reluctant Writer: A Search for a Cure. 64
Barbara Duff

Handling the Paper Load 68
Joan Lidrbauch

Black English and Writing: A Bilingual Approach to the Teaching of Composition 73
John Webb

Popular Culture and the Teaching of Usage 76
Joseph Luke Libis, Jr.

The Development of Writing Abilities. 78
Barbara K. Riggs

The Structure of the Expository Paragraph: Conflicting Theories. . . .81
Irma McCorkle

Using Field Work to Teach Writing 90
Cheryl Treadway

Using Prewriting to Improve Student Writing 98
Muriel L. Quammen

Journal-Keeping: Classroom and Lifetime Activity 103
Mary Brosmer

Avoiding Pretzel Prose: Christensen's Generative Rhetoric 108
Alexa Ann Lindquist

Flash Grammar and the Writing Process 111
Mark Mortine

References. 118

TEACHERS AND WRITERS:
Articles from the Ohio Writing Project

Teacher-Student Conferencing: A Way to Writing Improvement

Tom Romano

When I was a high school junior, I tried to sit in the last seat of the last row in my American Literature class. But the teacher had had me the year before, so she made me sit in the first seat of the middle row, directly in front of her desk. Although this made impossible seeing what was going on with my classmates, I was privy to all transactions that took place at Mrs. Dunbar's desk.

One morning we were in the process of constructing formal outlines for a classification paper. Mrs. Dunbar had grudgingly granted us a day to work in class provided we not "fiddle around." This was a nearly all-encompassing expression of hers that included anything from resting one's head to soothe an exploding headache to getting some class time to read the next day's assignment. Class time, Mrs. Dunbar told us, was meant for lecture, note taking, discussion, and testing, a perfect blending of activity, according to her.

I sat at my desk drawing diagrams of imaginary football plays. At the top of my paper was the single word, Sports. I was fiddling around. From the back of the room I heard footsteps, and before I could turn my head to see who it was, Bill Jackson brushed past my desk. Bill was black, beautifully built, the best athlete in school, and polite. He always said, "Yes, Ma'am" and "No, Ma'am," which made Mrs. Dunbar glow and me grimace. I knew Bill well. Hundreds of times since we had been freshmen I'd pressed footballs against his muscular stomach and silently bid him good running. Bill received straight A's in school and nearly everybody genuinely liked him.

Mrs. Dunbar never walked down the rows in class. If we students wanted to talk to her, we had to walk up to her desk, which is where Bill now stood, wearing his white cardigan sweater that featured on one pocket a big green letter M he had earned as starting left halfback during his sophomore year. In his hand Bill held an exquisitely neat outline which he had brought up for approval.

"Oh, music," said Mrs. Dunbar, taking the paper. "I love music. Mr. Dunbar and I go dancing at least twice a month at the Turquoise Ballroom."

"Yes, Ma'am," said Bill. "I also am a music lover."

Mrs. Dunbar was fairly radiant with the music, the turquoise, and the "Yes, Ma'am."

"Let's see, you're classifying--folk, classical, jazz, subcategories be-bop and swing. Good," she added, "I just love Benny Goodman. And then you have country and western, rock-and-roll."

Mrs. Dunbar stopped abruptly, her face flushed, her voice lost its lilt. "This is fine, William, except for your last one."

Bill looked puzzled. "Rock-and-roll?" he queried.

"Yes."

"I don't understand." In our eleven years of schooling rarely had I ever seen Bill in a fix. He was in one now.

"It's trash," said Mrs. Dunbar.

"I'm not saying whether it's good or bad," Bill pleaded, "I'm just including it as a form of music."

"If there is one thing rock-and-roll is not," said Mrs. Dunbar crisply, "it is music. You'll either drop the last category of this topic or choose a new one."

Bill stood for a moment, wavering, then grimaced, "Yes, Ma'am."

I lowered my eyes and looked at the play I'd created on paper, imagined it with real players on a green football field under lights. Amidst a flurry of movement, I handed our left halfback the ball, and he darted around right end for what I hoped would be a touchdown.

Happily, Bill went on to score many touchdowns, and not on football fields alone. Unhappily, Mrs. Dunbar went on to play the heavy in hundreds of teacher-student conferences before she retired, blunting the initiative and enthusiasm of many teenagers, none of whom could have been more compliant, more respectful than Bill Jackson. Years later when I read The Autobiography of Malcolm X, I wondered what advice the fiery, straight-talking Malcolm would have given Bill. Perhaps none. For all I could tell, the incident hadn't sprung from any racist beliefs. It was just unbelievably insensitive to a teenager, damned disrespectful.

In the "Prologue" of his novel Slapstick, Kurt Vonnegut recommends that people forget about love and start treating each other with "common decency" (1976, p. 3). This, he thinks, would make human beings more compassionate toward one another. When I daydream about that scene between Bill and Mrs. Dunbar, I imagine myself bolting from my seat and shouting, "For Chrissake, lady, a little common decency please!" But that kind of outburst would have achieved nothing but to convince Mrs. Dunbar that rock-and-roll was indeed corrupting youth, making them insolent and foulmouthed.

In contrast to the unfortunate scene described above, however, is the humanely conducted conference which will begin relationships of trust, understanding, and support, which will nurture and seal positive bonds between teacher and students. When this happens, the communication lines are cleared; both students and teacher are receptive; learning is ready to happen. William Irmscher writes in Teaching Expository Writing "that the single most important factor that affects improvement in the composition class is the teacher-student relationship" (1979, p. 49). If this be true, and I believe it is, then for writing teachers the conference becomes an indispensable part of the learning process.

I've experienced the power of the conference from both the student's view and the teacher's. As a college junior I went to see Milton White, my writing teacher, about improving a story I'd written so that I would feel confident sending the manuscript to a contest. Diffidently, I told Mr. White my problem. "Have a seat here beside me, Romano," he said, "and let's see how we can pack this story with detail." I left that office exhilarated, knowing that he accepted me, respected what I had written, and believed I could make the piece better. And as a teacher of ten years, I've seen this confidence develop in many of my students, this feeling that what they have written has value.

I drop to one knee beside a student's desk. I read aloud a poem she's written:

Snakie

It slithered up and struck
when noone was looking
But is'nt that when
most bad things occur?

It slid and wrapped,
consuming chairs and tables
And the snake got them
befor they got out.

She looks at me quizzically, her head tilted.

"I really like this, Dawn. This metaphor of the fire being like a snake is powerful, makes me feel how evil and sinister it is."

"A snake was the only thing I could compare it to."

"Nothing could have fit better," I say. "You know, I wondered how much I was reading into your poem."

"What do you mean?"

"I know the incident, so I filled in the details that you don't mention, like I knew your mom and dad. I know your sisters."

"You mean it's more private writing, like the book says?"

"The metaphor isn't private. You could leave this just as a vivid comparison, unless you want an objective reader to feel the devastating experience."

"By filling in those details?"

"Yes."

"What do you think?"

"I think this snake metaphor and those words licking and consuming are so strong that you should continue with this."

She nods.

Conference techniques are many, but the most important thing a teacher must keep in mind is this "common decency" which Vonnegut speaks of. The student is a human being, not a mechanical writing device that can be shaken like a candy machine to make the right product pop out, to vent anger and frustration upon. If a teacher has had initial success and the students, therefore, feel secure enough to be honest on paper, then their feelings are real and run deep, whether they are expressed in nonstandard usages, put together with run-on sentences, or developed with unsupported generalizations. The teacher who chastises a student for inept writing or dismisses the student's thoughts as merely shallow sentiments succeeds only in losing him. He learns nothing; the teacher has taught nothing, except, probably, bitter resentment. The job of a teacher is to build, not to destroy.

So critical is this concept of building the student's self-image that one teacher, Charles R. Duke (1975), adapted strategies from counseling for his conferencing technique. His four steps include focusing, clarification, acceptance words, and reassurance. The idea of focusing is to reduce the student's chance for anxiety by telling him what specific area will be explored, what will be expected of him, and how long the conference will last. In clarification the teacher shows understanding and appreciation for what has been written. This is done without the use of any technical terms, which only serve to intimidate the student. Throughout the conference the teacher should use acceptance words whenever possible, words like Yes or I see or That's clear. These create a positive attitude in the student, bolster his self-esteem. The teacher provides reassurance when the student feels that his errors are all-defeating, that he cannot improve his writing, that he is alone when he writes of troubling emotions (p. 45).

The importance of creating a positive, secure atmosphere is also pointed out by Rosemarie Arbur (1977). Courtesy, acceptance, and amiability are words she uses to explain the first element of a conference, engagement, the purpose of which is to put the student at ease, to make him comfortable, to free him to speak. Special care must be taken to insure the student that you differentiate between him and his performance. The teacher accepts the students; it's the writing he wants to improve (p. 338).

Even the arrangement of furniture in the conference area can either reassure or intimidate. To sit in chairs facing each other is not ideal, because it forces too many eye-to-eye confrontations, making the student feel trapped. And any arrangement which features the teacher's all-imposing desk as a barrier between the two is not recommended. After all, who are teachers walling in or walling out? The best arrangement is for the student to pull up a chair beside the teacher so that both can look at the reason for the conference, the paper. Eye contact in this case will be voluntary

(Arbur, 1977, p. 339).

Under most circumstances, I prefer a variation of this which removes the teacher's desk from the conference altogether. I like to kneel by the student or to pull up an empty desk and sit at his left. This makes me feel more like a helper than a dictator, a role I am more comfortable with and one which is less threatening to the student.

Once a comfortable, reassuring atmosphere is established, how then should the conference proceed? Most teachers who have written about conferencing recommend, as Charles R. Duke calls it, the nondirective approach (p. 45). This is in contrast to the directive approach in which the teacher does most of the talking, prescribing cures for the many ailments of the student's paper. The student becomes an oyster-eyed nodder who decides he'll be damned before he gets himself into another of these sessions.

The nondirective conference, however, seeks to let students speak as a way of working out their problems, of helping themselves, which isn't to say that the teacher cannot seize upon opportunities "to show what works and what might work so they know how to read evolving writing so it will evolve into writing worth reading" (Murray, 1979, p. 15). But first we must listen.

> Dawn stands in the doorway of the room during my conference period. "I'm having trouble getting this started," she says.
>
> "Let's take a look," I say. She walks in and we sit at some desks.
>
> "I've really not done anything with it."
>
> "Too close to it maybe?"
>
> "I don't know, but I want to write about it."
>
> I lean back in the desk. "It'll be tough. I wasn't able to write about my father's death until six or seven years after it happened. Even then I could only write it in a journal."
>
> "The snake comparison was easy. It's been in my head for months. The rest is what's hard."
>
> "You can quit if you want, if you aren't ready. What you've written is done well."
>
> Dawn is silent a moment. "What would I have to do to really make it work?"
>
> "What do you think a reader would need in order to feel the impact?"
>
> "They'd need to know my parents. How could I do that?"
>
> "Show them, put them in the poem. How do you remember them that day?"
>
> Again a brief silence, then Dawn speaks, "They were working in the field. Mom was driving the tractor. It was a good day. Dad was all sweaty from working and Mom had her hair up."
>
> "There you are. That's a good picture. Put all those sounds and sights in."
>
> "Yeah."
>
> "You think your reader needs to know where they were going?"
>
> "Isn't it clear?" She reads over the poem. "It isn't, not unless you know."
>
> "And you want this to work for anybody, right?"
>
> "Yes."

In an article included in On Righting Writing, Deanna M. Gutschow (1975) points out that if the teacher employs a questioning technique during the invention stage of the writing process, the conference can become "thinking as discovery" (p. 97). Not only can students be led to fulfill their potentials, their visions in a piece of writing, but they will also become better writers. All professional writers are possessed of two voices: one which dictates the flow of words, the second which questions about matters of clarity and logic. By experiencing this questioning technique in conferences, students begin to internalize the second voice, begin to gain "the true freedom of the writer

31 11

who looks inward rather than outward for critical evaluation" (p. 100).

Some teachers are leery about reading the work of a student for the first time with the student present. I am one of those teachers. I like time to ponder, to consider, to deliberate. This is not necessarily bad. Indeed, some papers, because of their complexity or length, will require that the teacher read them without the student present. But much student writing can be read with the student at the teacher's side, preferably read aloud by either student or teacher to eliminate the agony of silence and waiting (Fassler, 1978, p. 188).

This method of evaluation offers further advantages: for one thing, the teacher serves as an immediate responsive audience (Duke, p. 46), a real reader, in the flesh, here and now. This can profoundly affect young writers, especially if they view their mentor more as a reader who cherishes good writing and less as an authoritarian corrector ready to zap them for one false comma. A cold reading also gives the students an honest reaction, not a canned one prepared the night before (Fassler, p. 189). And actually seeing and hearing how a teacher reacts to writing goes a long way toward demystifying the process of evaluation for the student. Instead of viewing evaluation as a "mysterious ritual" (Knapp, 1976, p. 649), he will see it as a human activity. Of course, if the teacher thinks a quiet, less pressured reading would help him gain more insight, there is no rule which prohibits him from asking the student if he may keep the piece awhile.

Teachers shouldn't take this as a cue, however, to scrape and scrounge for every major and minor error, and then drop "the whole load" at the next meeting (Duke, p. 47). In fact, this is to be avoided at all costs. It can only intimidate, dissillusion, overwhelm. Donald Murray (1978b) warns us to ease the sharply critical eye in matters of students' writing, especially during the delicate growing stages when the slightest feeling of self-doubt or imagined ridicule can stunt the writing's growth, indeed, kill it (p. 59).

Upon one occasion when I read a paper with a student beside me, I routinely corrected a spelling error. I glanced at the young writer and his expression told me I had lost him. My action was irrevocable. In the student's eyes I had undergone a sudden transformation. No longer was I interested in his voice and his meaning; I had become someone concerned only with correctness. There is a time for concern about spelling accuracy but certainly not until most of the growing is accomplished.

In the morning between classes, Dawn stops by my room with a much expanded version of her poem. She hurries to her next class. I read:

Compensation

Sweat poured off his face
as fleks of old black hay
clung to his bare chest and
forearms.
He stacked hay like a man getting
older but with strength enough left in him.

She had her black greying hair
in curlers driving the tractor.
The click and whine of
the baler diminished all other sound.

They were happy.
We were happy.
[redacted] it had been a year since we'd
felt that way.

They went out that night
and while they were drinking
the snake appeared in another
ballroom.

it slithered up and struck
when no one was looking.
But is'nt that when most
bad things occur?

It slid through the halls
consuming chairs and tables
noone took the bus boy
seriously.
And the snake got them
before they got out

We felt the shock then
and feel the sting today.
And when the "compensation
for the loss" statements
come in
~~I feel sick~~

Dawn comes back later that afternoon during my conference period.

"How you've improved this, Dawn. A clear picture is coming together now."

"I couldn't believe how much longer this became."

"Not just longer though, is it?"

"No, it's better."

"I really see your dad. It's like I can feel the sweat on my own face. I'll bet he didn't look anything like that when he went out."

"No, he was all dressed up. They both were. Mom wore a blue dress."

"That's really a different image of them. You might use it. You have any spots you're not happy with?"

"The ending?"

"Wonder why?"

"I don't know."

"Maybe if you got particular again, this time about how the shock hit you, what you did."

"Maybe."

"You have something good in the ending though."

"'Compensation for the loss' statements?"

"Yeah, and I'm glad you crossed out 'I feel sick.'"

"I know. It didn't work, but I need something."

"How about working with that snake metaphor?"

"Like how?"

"Extend it. How can a snake make you sick?"

"What do you mean?"

"You think about it. I want to help you but I don't want to make this my poem."

"OK."

"Seems like there's a lot left out of that short stanza that starts with 'They were happy.'"

"There is."

"You want to go into it, give us some whys?"

"I don't know."

"You've got a lot of good things going here, Dawn."

"I'll work on it over the weekend, bring it in Monday."

Time looms as an important factor. How can teachers possibly spend with all their students the time required by the nondirective approach? They can't. Most of the articles I read were written by college teachers and most of their conferencing was done during office hours. In fact, some of them conducted an entire course through individual conferences. But this may not even be a good idea: a study done at Fitchburg State College showed that students who met in regular classes combined with occasional conferences made

more improvement in their writing than did students who underwent an intense conferencing program. This was especially true for students in the average SAT score range (Budz and Grabar, 1976, p. 656).

Although public school teachers are without the luxury of office hours, opportunities to talk with students do exist. Not every conference need be a formal affair (Duke, p. 46). Most of mine, in fact, are not so. I talk with students in a variety of circumstances: quietly, while the class is reading an assignment or engaged in independent study; quickly, during the last five or ten minutes of a period if we have finished early; normally, as I move about the room while all students are revising papers; and loudly, on occasion, when walking down the hall with a student amid change of class hubbub. A pointed question or two, a word of encouragement, regardless of the setting, can often be all that students need to find their way toward some success.

And, furthermore, to utilize time more effectively, public school teachers must judiciously use directive conferencing. Errors of spelling, punctuation, and usage are probably best handled by this approach (Duke, p. 46), especially in the latter stages of the writing process. At that time the teacher can subtly and without threat to the student change roles from the friendly conversant to the gentle expert (Jacobs and Karlines, 1977, p. 489) interested in helping the student communicate thoughts powerfully and without hindrance to the audience. By dealing with only one or two of the most serious problems at a time (Duke, p. 46), the teacher can sensitively and humanely correct and, above all, instruct.

Monday morning Dawn walks into my room before school begins. My homeroom students sit in groups, chatting. Dawn's eyes glisten.
I smile. "How did it go?"
"Look."
She thrusts the poem into my hands.

(Compensation) (Snake) (?)

Sweat poured off his face
as fleks of old black hay
clung to his bare chest and forearms
He stacked hay like a man getting older.
His wife sat atop the tractor
her black, greying hair in curlers
The click and whine of
the baler diminished all other sound
She pointed as she saw us
and they waved.
Mom ~~pulled on~~ smoothed her long pale blue dress
Dad straightened his tie.
as they went out to meet
their friends.
While they were talking and joking
the snake appeared in another
part of the club.

It slithered up and struck
When no one was looking
~~But isn't that when most bad things occur?~~

It slid through the halls
consuming chairs and tables
licking walls and carpet
with its tongue.
The snake's breathe touched
and smothered . . . .

No one took the bus boy seriously
And the snake had them

When my brother told us,
I did'nt cry much, until later,
just walked away and did'nt want to believe.
and when the "compensation
for the loss" statements
come in,
the venom is strong

"Venom. Boy, did you pick the right word. You expanded the metaphor above there too."

She nods.

"And crossing those two lines out is a good choice."

"Yeah, you know those two lines were on my mind a lot. I thought because I liked them so much, but it was because they weren't right. It's obvious."

"After your brother told you what happened, Dawn, where did you walk away to?"

"The back yard."

"Put it in."

She does.

"I feel a slight jump in that second stanza after 'their friends.' Let me give you the start of a transitional line." I write in the margin, "And, later, amid . . ."

"Amid what?" Dawn asks.

"What's going on around the people?"

"Music."

"Good. Anything else?"

"A lot of noise. Laughing, I'll bet."

"OK, think about it and see what you want to put in there."

"Put music and laughter."

I record it for her. "Instead of using 'his face' and 'his wife' in that first stanza, would it be better to use 'Dad's' and 'Mom'?'

"Yes." She writes those important words.

"I like your dilemma with the title. If you use either of them, you throw away surprises in the poem."

"I know. Can't use them, but I wish I could come up with something."

"Maybe I can or you can ask some other people what they think."

"Anything. I'm tired of thinking about a title. What I have been thinking about though is if the parts flow all right."

"The parts?"

"I have three different time periods: the day, that night, and afterwards."

"It's OK. You could use Roman numerals or subtitles if you like."

"No more titles for sure."

We type Dawn's poem and publish it in the creative arts magazine.

The Loss

I. Sweat poured off Dad's face
as flecks of old black hay
clung to his bare chest and forearms.
He stacked hay like a man getting older.
Mom sat atop the tractor,
her black, greying hair in curlers.
The click and whine of
the baler diminished all other sound.
She pointed as she saw us
and they waved.

II. Mom smoothed her long, pale blue dress.
Dad straightened his tie
as they left the house to meet
their friends.
And, later, amid music and laughter,
as they talked and joked,
the snake appeared in another
part of the nightclub.

It slithered up and struck
when no one was looking.
It slid through the halls,
consuming chairs and tables,
licking walls and carpet
with its tongue.
The snake's breath touched
and smothered . . .

No one took seriously the busboy on stage.
And the snake had them.

III. When my brother told us,
I didn't cry much, until later,
just walked into the back yard,
didn't want to believe.
And when the
"compensation for the loss"
statements came in,
the venom is strong.

Dawn Koontz

A victory for her. A fulfilling experience for us. And also a vivid reminder that I must be careful in my conferences with students. Like a country boy, I walk upon the top rail of a rickety wooden fence, struggling to maintain my balance. If I fall to one side, I fail to help students communicate their experiences with power; fall to the other side and I bury the students' voices. Their writing becomes mine. When that happens, teaching is fraudulant, learning is sham.

Perhaps I went too far when I gave Dawn the first part of a line, when I encouraged her to develop a metaphor, when I pushed her to be specific about naming a place. Perhaps not. I get so involved in the process that I have a hard time telling. The truth is probably that I occasionally fall to the side of helping too much, then hastily vault back to the top of the fence to resume my precarious balancing.

However it may be, some definite benefits emerge from teacher-student conferences when they are carried out in an atmosphere of acceptance, trust, and mutual respect. The better teachers can make students feel about their writing, the more inclined they will be to write in the future, the more intent they will be upon improving their skills. In addition to this, speaking to students as opposed to merely writing comments on papers allows teachers to be surer that their points are communicated, that students do, indeed, understand (Fassler, p. 187).

Another clear message that the conference sends to students is that their writing is important, so important that the teacher will actually meet with them to discuss it and nothing else (Knapp, p. 648). The idea begins to sink in that writing has value, that putting words on paper is well worth the time taken to do it. And, finally, because the students have created the piece of writing, have, in reality, put themselves on paper, when the teacher takes time to speak with them, students intuitively understand that they, too, are significant.

Time. Our lives. We own nothing that means more. When we, as teachers,

take time to encourage our students, to help them see possibilities, to enhance their self-confidence, we cannot have spent time any more fruitfully, neither for our students nor for ourselves.

Of Minds and Men

Rose Finkelman

Remember Tevye, the lovable dairyman in Fiddler on the Roof? For each problem he faced, he found opposing ways to resolve it. He recognized the two-handedness of life; he would consider things "on the one hand," and reconsider "on the other hand." What he didn't realize was that the very two-handedness to which he referred was and still is a metaphor for two-mindedness; that is, human brains are asymmetrical, having two separate hemispheres with rather specialized yet complementary functions, each capable of processing information on its own even when communication with the other is rendered impossible. In fact, this asymmetry of the brain is the essence of what makes us human beings rather than animals. Of course, our brains are similar to animals': they are each structured to control motor movements, vision and hearing, and each is divided so that the right hemisphere controls the left side of the body and the left hemisphere the right side:

> Similarities between animal brain and human brain decline markedly with the more specialized functions of the human brain. Three of these specialized functions come immediately to mind: language, music, and drawing (Geschwind). Language is universal among people: most of us in all cultures are capable of learning to speak, write, and read, however limitedly. Drawing is universal among people: most of us in all cultures are able to make simple figures such as circles, squares, rectangles, and so forth. Music is universal among people: most of us in all cultures are able to recognize and reproduce even complex melodies. Animals cannot. These specialized functions are profoundly asymmetrical in the human brain.
>
> In addition, three other brain functions in humans appear to be asymmetrical although they are not yet too clearly understood: our curious and sometimes all-too painful sense of time; the expression of our emotional states and our recognition of them in others; and the most obvious, of course, our handedness. Approximately 90 percent of the human population favors the right hand. The non-human appears to have no preference except when specifically taught a task, as when one teaches a dog to "shake." These preliminaries point to a significant fact about the human brain: its asymmetry is the most striking biological characteristic of the human being. This asymmetry, which generates differing cognitive talents, enhances our cognitive options and thus the creative capabilities of the total being. (Rico, 1980, pp. 4-5)

This has important implications for us as teachers, for if we want to facilitate the growth of the total being, then we have to understand the hemisphericity of the brain and know how to capitalize on it in order to further learning.

The left hemisphere of the brain, which controls the right side of the body and is often considered the dominant hemisphere, is ordered, logical, verbal, and analytical. It processes stimuli sequentially, tending to "mediate inputs in a reductive or 'sorting out' way, processing the variables systematically in order to find the final 'best answer' or solution. This is the blueprint for the rational, linear, cognitive domain" (Samples, 1975, p. 26). It is here that language processing occurs; and often, damage to the left brain prohibits people from expressing themselves verbally. The right brain, in contrast, "helps human beings comprehend their universe through a nonverbal, nonrational, spatial and intuitive mode. Right brain activity is holistic allowing the individual to comprehend all things at once, to be aware of overall patterns" (Palmer, 1980, p. 49). It helps us understand metaphors, see associative patterns, and create new combinations of ideas. It allows us to use intuition and often provides leaps of insight (the "Eureka! I've got it!" effect) without making us figure things out logically. And although the

two hemispheres are different, they are complementary, interacting to produce cognitive growth and a constantly expanding awareness. This interaction is necessary for us to function as unified beings, with right brain activity recently recognized as "the main stimulus to the growth and development of logical structures" (Cole, 1980, p. 39).

Research has proven that when the two hemispheres are unable to interact, due either to brain damage or surgery, people simply do not function as unified wholes. Dr. Roger Sperry and his associates at the California Institute of Technology investigated epileptics whose hemispheres were surgically separated so that their seizures would be limited and they could lead relatively normal lives. This separation was made possible through the severing of each patient's corpus callosum, the network of nerves through which the two brains communicate. Sperry and his colleagues devised tests especially for use with these split-brain patients; their studies indicated how differently reality is perceived and processed by each hemisphere:

> In one test, two different pictures were flashed for an instant on a screen, with a split-brain patient's eyes fixed on a midpoint so that scanning both images was prevented. Each hemisphere, then, received <u>different</u> pictures. A picture of a spoon on the left side of the screen went to the right brain; a picture of a knife on the right side of the screen went to the verbal left brain. . . . When questioned, the patient gave <u>different responses</u>. If asked to <u>name</u> what had been flashed on the screen, the confidently articulate left hemisphere caused the patient to say, "knife." Then the patient was asked to reach behind a curtain with his left hand (right hemisphere) and pick out a spoon from a group of objects that included a spoon and a knife. If the experimenter asked the patient to identify what he held in his hand behind the curtain, the patient might look confused for a moment and then say, "a knife." The right hemisphere, knowing that the answer was wrong but not having sufficient words to correct the articulate left hemisphere, continued the dialogue by causing the patient to mutely shake his head. At that, the verbal left hemisphere wondered aloud, "Why am I shaking my head?"
>
> In another test that demonstrated the right brain to be better at spatial problems, a male patient was given several wooden shapes to arrange to match a certain design. His attempts with his right hand (left hemisphere) failed again and again. His right hemisphere kept trying to help. The right hand would knock the left hand away; and finally, the man had to <u>sit</u> on his left hand to keep it away from the puzzle. When the scientists finally suggested that he use both hands, the spatially "smart" left hand had to shove the spatially "dumb" right hand away to keep it from interfering. (Edwards, 1979, pp. 30-31)

In other words, we truly are of two minds, two modes of perception, and only when there is complete integration of those two minds and modes do we become fully functioning human beings.

Interesting, you say. But what does all this have to do with teaching English, or more specifically, writing? Actually, that's not too difficult to determine if you stop and think for a moment. We complain that student writing lacks imagination, creativity, specifics, liveliness; we say that it's dull, formulaic. We maintain that students think they have nothing to say, that they are not original thinkers, that they produce worthless papers. Well, of course they do. Look at how our educational system is designed. Traditionally, we teach only to the left half of the brain, which is linear and deals with the abstract. We prescribe rules for the kids: a five-paragraph theme, thesis sentence at the end of the introductory paragraph, three supporting paragraphs, a concluding paragraph that reaffirms the thesis. Logical? Yes. Sequential? Absolutely. But wait: while we know that

language itself is linear, we also know that the composing process is not. Writing, first of all, is discovery or invention; the students first have to learn what they know before they can express what they know. The right brain thrives on invention; the left brain does not. And if we as composition teachers subscribe to the tenet that "what is basic to writing is not the words on the page but how they get there" (Glassner, 1980, p. 74), then we have to ensure that we help our students get the words out--and this means we must provide experiences which will stimulate right brain activity. This does not mean that we should ignore the left, but we must consciously develop the right, which has been virtually ignored in Western education. Right brain activity and imagery are the vehicles "through which incubation produces creativity" (Gowan, 1979, p. 39), so stimulating right hemisphere processing is a logical route to better writing.

Fine, you say. You're convinced. But how do you encourage this right brain development? You may already be doing it without even realizing it. Any activities which expose students to the arts--visits to museums, orchestra concerts, theatrical productions, artist-in-residence programs--provide right brain stimulation; students sooner or later develop deeper aesthetic perceptions. Expressive writing also stimulates the right brain; if you regularly encourage free writing in your classroom, you're developing that right hemisphere. Journals are also a useful tool, and Robert Samples recommends employing them in two ways that really get kids to draw upon their subconscious perceptions (another term for right-brain imagery). First, encourage kids to daydream for a change, and have them keep a daydream journal. In reading over their entries, they may very well perceive patterns or relationships worth expression or exploration in later writings. Also encourage them to keep a record of the night dreams they remember; have them write down the main elements of the dream as soon as they awaken from it, then later elaborate it with sensory detail in prose or poetry (p. 28). These certainly aren't exercises in logic but in intuitive discovery--right brain processing.

Exposing students to alternate states of awareness also stimulates right brain perceptions, although you certainly do not have to go the route of hypnosis and meditative trances. Merely have students assume relaxed positions and close their eyes; then dim the lights and play some music (I usually stay away from AC-DC or anything with lyrics that might clutter students' minds with someone else's messages; any instrumentals, from Bach and Beethoven to "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" will do). Then tell students to write whatever came into their heads as they experienced the music and relaxation. Or you can take students on a walk through their own personal forests; again, students should relax and "go with the flow" of their images as they travel through this imaginary forest, writing down what they feel and see as they perceive their surroundings (Palmer, 1980, p. 50). Sometimes you can vary this idea by playing recordings of jungle sounds or primitive music to help set the mood. Still another technique is the guided fantasy:

> Ask the students to sit relaxed in their chairs or, better yet, lie comfortably on the floor. Have them close their eyes. Speaking slowly and clearly, lead them through a series of short fantasies patterned on something like one of the following:
>
> You are in a meadow. . . . Walk slowly straight ahead. . . . Soon you will see some bushes to your right. . . . Go over to the bushes and look carefully at them. . . . Down on the ground there is a small box about the size of your hand. . . . Pick it up and look inside. . . . There will be two things in the box that you are familiar with and one thing that you have never seen before. . . . Look at them and then put them back. . . . Turn and walk back to the starting place. . . . When you get there, open your eyes.
>
> This classroom has been transported to a new and different place. Soon you will walk out of the door and explore this

totally new place. . . . Now, go ahead. I will ask you to come back in three minutes.

Imagine your desk is on a beach and the ocean is (calm, stormy, warm, cold). . . . It washes up around the legs of your chair. . . . You notice a snarl of seaweed and it has an object in it. . . . Look at the object carefully, then throw it back into the sea.

You are in a large courtyard, and at the center is a circular fountain. . . . It has been said that if you look into the fountain, any question you ask will be answered. . . . Go to the fountain and ask what you most want to know. (This is best used as a private activity, when results are not to be discussed. It is especially helpful during the early stages, when you are trying to build student confidence in the fantasizing process. Only you know your own students well enough to judge when discussions are appropriate and when they are not.)

Let your own creativeness be your guide in using similar techniques to seek metaphoric insights into concepts as widely separated as gravity and democracy, the functions of a circulatory system, and economics. (Samples, p. 27)

Other methods by which you can stimulate metaphoric insights are plentiful. Tell the student to "become" someone or something else: a rock, a house, a storm, a zipper on a fat man's pants, a mythological creature. Then ask him or her to respond to a situation, problem, or question in that persona. (This empathizing is also a good technique for developing a sense of audience in your young writers.) Have students use metaphors to describe themselves; ask them, "What color are you? What natural element? What season? What food? What month? What day of the week? What piece of furniture? What animals? What car? What place? What musical instrument? What article of clothing?" I've found that students really enjoy these two exercises, and they love to apply the second one to teachers, classmates, family members, and even literary characters, too. They also enjoy the challenge of finding meaning in unlikely word pairs: thunder/peaceful, killing/sweet, balloons/chickens, and so on. With these pairs, I let the kids respond in any mode they wish--poetry, narration, exposition, whatever. Anything that encourages students to think metaphorically, to find relationships where there seemingly are none, also encourages right brain development.

Probably, though, one of the best exercises for stimulating the right hemisphere is clustering. Clustering is a form of brainstorming, but instead of throwing around words or ideas at random, you begin with one stimulus word as the center, and then radiate outward from it with as many associations as you can think of for a period of time usually not exceeding ten minutes. You follow each association outward from the stimulus word until that association is exhausted; then, you begin a new one. The resulting cluster of ideas is an externalization of an internal thinking process, and it allows students to see what they might be able to write about. It works for high schoolers, for sixth graders, for first graders; it works for bright students and for those with learning difficulties. Although a myriad of other right brain stimulation activities abounds, clustering appears to be, if not the best, certainly one of the best methods for encouraging holistic modes of thought. It is the internal discovery process externalized, a graphic representation of how our subconscious perceptions combine to form a whole concept.

Advantages of developing the right brain are profound. Stimulating its processes through the arts and exercises like those I have described encourages kids to produce more writing, and this enhances their facility with their language when they turn to more formal exposition. Says one

composition teacher, in response to an administrator's challenge to explain the improvement of student writing in her school, ". . . our kids are writing so well because they have opened up to their right-brain mode of awareness. They are learning how to 'see' as the artist 'sees'; write as the writer writes who intuitively perceives the 'wholeness' of what is being written, who hears the words spoken as they're written from that stunning center of flashing light and color in the mind" (Palmer, p. 51). That kind of writing is exciting and magical; wouldn't you love your students to experience that instead of the boredom and frustration which so often is their legacy?

Finally, all educators, not just composition teachers, should consider the importance of right brain processing. We are indeed in trouble if we graduate young people who can compute but not conceptualize, who can memorize rules and formulas and theories but cannot apply them. Intuition is as necessary to the mathematician and scientist as it is to the writer and other artists; correlations and their significance cannot be sought through linear, left-brain processes, but instead must simply occur through subconscious, intuitive insight. Therefore, in today's frenzy to get back to the basics, we must go farther than merely the rules of grammar and arithmetic; we must work on developing intuitive powers in our students, thereby allowing quality interaction of their left and right hemispheres. In other words, we must go back to the brain. After all, what is more basic to learning, and to living, than that?

Using Poetry to Develop Fluency

Pamela Emnett

As a teacher I have always stressed expository writing in my high school English courses and have often felt a need to develop writing in the poetic mode in my classroom. While preparing to attend the Ohio Writing Project and reviewing the writing activities that my students particularly responded to and enjoyed, I was truly surprised to find that the most successful of these assignments were based on poetry. No poetry teacher, I just didn't understand how this had happened in my classroom. After more careful examination and much thought, I discovered that I had unknowingly been using poetry as a kind of springboard into other modes of writing: both the writing and study of poetry had sometimes served as a kind of invention or prewriting that had led into further transactional and poetic writing.

The reasons for this are, I think, simple and logical ones. First, when I ask my students to write poetry, they automatically hone their writing, paring away at the words until they have left only those essential to the meaning and the mood of their thoughts. Second, as Kenneth Koch points out, "From the viewpoint of the student while he is writing, a short work is less demanding" (1977, p. 47) and poetry can be awfully short indeed. Third, asking students to write poetry and then using it as a kind of prewriting is a gentle con that causes them to write while never suspecting that they might be able to expand the poetry later in their writing. Fourth, letting students use poetry from their textbooks as an impetus to writing drawn from personal experience allows them to see what great poetry has to do with them. They find that feelings they think are too personal or silly to be understood by anyone else are the ones they share with "great authors" (Koch, 1973, p. 10). They begin to realize that their own thoughts are legitimate sources of writing ideas.

Also, we know that prewriting is a time of exploration before we actually begin to write formally. It is a time of observing the world around and within us, recording these observations, and trying to comprehend our reactions to them (Irmscher, 1979, p. 78). The very nature of poetry (or writing in the poetic mode) stresses our roles as spectators and indicates that we can integrate poetry and prewriting (Britton, 1978, p. 16).

Although the activities we can use to help our students develop prewriting skills are unlimited, they seem to fall into two general categories: those that "help students loosen up and overcome the psychological barriers to writing" and those that emphasize control of writing by "helping students see the importance of structural paradigms as ways of generating ideas" (Irmscher, 1979, pp. 78-79). The two concepts seem at odds but actually work together to help students gain insight into themselves and their writing. I want to describe to you both kinds of activities as I use them in my classroom in connection with poetry.

Koch tells us that any idea for writing poetry that we introduce to our students should be easy for the students to understand, should interest them immediately, and should bring something new to their poetry (1970, p. 8). Such an approach seems to demand a writing idea that lets each student draw his response from his own experience rather than from the commentary in his textbook or literary anthology. It may also seem to imply that the teacher will be pressured to make each assignment original and easy to understand. Fortunately, Koch has been kind enough to include several imaginative and workable poetry ideas in his Wishes, Lies, and Dreams, and I have found from my experience in the high school classroom that the poetry ideas that work best for my students are two that make few demands on the teacher other than initial preparation and acting as "reader, admirer, and furnisher of additional ideas" (p. 29).

The first of these ideas for writing poetry is a relatively simple form, the Who-What-When-Where-and-Why poem. In this five-line poem, the writers answer each one of these questions in one line with a word, a phrase, or a sentence. They may arrange the lines in any order they choose. The form is easy for the teacher to explain and easy for even very young children to follow.

Writing one of these poems is an especially effective way of eliciting student responses to a unit in progress and may serve as prewriting for a more elaborate assignment later on. The who-what-when-where-why of the poem is reminiscent of the agent-act-agency-scene-purpose of Burke's dramatistic invention process (although most teachers and all students would surely swoon if told so).

These examples of the Who-What-When-Where-and-Why poem were written in some ten minutes by students in a sophomore English class. After we had read the instructions together, the students chose their own subjects and began writing.

Lonely Me

I'm a joke.
No one likes to hear me
In any part of town.
When my end comes
I'm not funny at all.

Wreck

I
Died
On the highway
Long, long ago.
I thought I was fast.

What I Must Do

I
lay in my bed
In my room
Every night
Thinking about what I must do to
get through another day.

These poems are evidence that "teaching is not the right word for what takes place: it is more like permitting the children to discover something they already have" (1979, p. 25). Students can make valid statements about their experience in fresh, emphatic ways using this form; therefore, it may be considered a valuable step in prewriting.

Paste-pot poetry is another poetry idea that is adaptable for students from kindergarten to senior high school. For example, two six-year-old boys who will enter first grade in September wrote the poems reproduced here.

toys
Kids' stuff
fun
precious
special
mine

My bicycle is fun
tough
a friend.
We can do it all.

To make a paste-pot poem, students simply clip words and phrases from magazine advertisements, experiment in arranging the clippings to compose poems, and then glue their finished compositions to paper (Fox, 1978, p. 11).

Writing these poems appeals to students because they don't have to spell correctly, worry about punctuation, or produce neat handwriting. The actual physical acts of cutting, arranging, and gluing are real pluses, too, because they provide the kind of hands-on activity that helps children to manipulate objects and develop ordering schemes that are required for verbal understanding (Ginsburg and Opper, 1975, p. 36). As the activity progresses, students become relaxed, forget to be self-conscious, and begin to enjoy playing with words and thoughts.

Paste-pot poems make grand displays in the classroom, pulling passers-by in from the hallway to read them. My students are pleased that they have written interesting poems that can be appreciated by an audience outside the classroom. I am pleased that they have been successful poets and that they have produced pieces of writing that "can also function as introductions to and stimuli for class discussions and writing" (Fox, 1978, p. 115).

Both the Who-What-When-Where-and-Why poem and the paste-pot poetry are prewriting exercises that (like freewriting) encourage student writers to become more fluent by exploring their thoughts and imaginations. A more structured and more controlled way to use poetry to inspire further writing is to ask students to write <u>from</u> the poetry in their textbooks and anthologies.

Because most traditional English courses must include composition and the study of literature, this method can work well for most of us. We must, however, remember that this kind of invention doesn't mean to explicate poetry or teach poetic convention by having students respond to such questions as "Stephen Spender's poem 'What I Expected' deals with the speakers' disillusionment. Cite a specific example from the poem that shows the speakers' disenchantment." It means instead to ask them to respond to Spender's poem by describing a situation in which they realized the differences between their expectations and the realities they found. It means to let them read the poem and try to come to terms with it on their own ground by bringing some aspect of the poet's work to their own writing (Koch, 1973, p. 13). Whenever I use this kind of assignment in my classroom, the poem comes alive for my students and my students' writing comes alive for me.

Students in my senior English classes have been practicing this idea for the past three years by writing word association papers from Shakespearean sonnets. After three weeks of scanning lines, spotting images, translating archaic language, and otherwise pulling sonnets apart, we've been putting them all back together again through the word association paper.

This technique, described in Bernice Maxine Phillips' <u>How to Visit a Tombstone</u> (n.d.), is a creative way for students to relate personally to the sonnet. They simply let their minds wander over the words in their favorite sonnet, jotting down memories that emerge (p. 19). William Irmscher (1979) contends that during prewriting "the act of collecting makes possible associations that may not have otherwise occurred to the writer" (p. 78). The first steps in writing the word association paper closely resemble this procedure.

To most students, the most difficult single task in writing this paper is finding ways of tying all their separate memories together. This gives me the opportunity to really encourage them to develop transitions in their writing.

Another way to use poetry as a method of invention is to ask students to respond to another piece of literature through poetry. I have had students read this poem by Ray Bruce Indian Phil George after they have watched a videotape of All Quiet on the Western Front (Waugh, 1970, p. 20).

They said, "You are no longer a lad."
I nodded.
They said, "Enter the council lodge."
I sat.
They said, "Our lands are at stake."
I scowled.
They said, "We are at war."
I hated.
They said, "Prepare red war symbols."
I painted.
They said, "Count coups."
I scalped.
They said, "You'll see friends die."
I cringed.
They said, "Desperate warriors fight best."
I charged.
They said, "Some will be wounded."
I bled.
They said, "To die is glorious."
They lied.

The students then choose the couplet that most particularly appeals to them and "fill in" after the verb in the second line. The same procedure can lead to terrific reports over books with the same theme.

An imaginative teacher will find lots of poems that will lend themselves to this kind of exercise. But you must be careful, as Koch (1973) notes, to phrase "the writing suggestion . . . in order to help a child to feel excited and to think he wants to write" (p. 17). The success of any single writing assignment, indeed the success of all writing in our classrooms, depends upon how we approach the subject of helping our students become competent writers. I am convinced that providing innovative prewriting exercises will help us be more successful.

Using poetry as a method of invention is not a new idea; nor did it, like Athena, spring full-blown from my head one morning between second and third periods. Like many effective teaching ideas, it evolved slowly in my classroom over a number of years. In fact, I didn't even know that I had fostered this kind of prewriting until I was forced to find a topic for this paper. I see now that this method works so well for my students that it is incorporated naturally into my classroom curriculum of literature and composition and thus into their writing.

Writing from poetry is not a way to analyze or interpret a poem, but it is a way to relate the ideas expressed in the poem to ourselves--our lives, our feelings, our ideas. It can lead our students to a new, deeper awareness of the world around them, an awareness that can, in turn, lead to their writing with real power.

When Is "Done" Done?

Margaret Orlett

We're after revision strategies. We want some practical procedures for carrying out the revision of writing--and we want these procedures for ourselves as much as for our students. In our own writing, when we say that "we're revising," what do we mean? Are we sorting out ideas and approaches before we really begin? Are we reading over a first brainstorming effort to see if we've "said something"? Are we refining our sequences and improving our transitions? Are we about to red-pencil our first typed version? Or what? "Revising" becomes our "catch phrase" when we wish to suggest that a piece of writing is moving along, improving, making progress toward completion. And, of course, "revising" is a great legitimizer of hours spent, coffee consumed, and wastebaskets filled.

But what is revision, actually? To teach the activity, to embed it into the writing curriculum, to evaluate it, to plan for students' command of the skill and consequent ownership of their work--that is our goal as curriculum designers and writing instructors. And for that we need a frame of reference, a viable theory.

Toward a theory of revision. What we see, of course, as we search for a reference theory, is that there is not a conventional, well-developed single model for this procedure. As a matter of fact, "revision" is a rather slippery term. Donald M. Murray (1978) asserts that revision is the "least researched, least examined, least understood and--usually--least taught" of all the writing skills (p. 85). There is emerging, however, a definable body of literature on the revision of writing. Within it are represented three quite different conceptions of what the revision-process actually entails. The first conception, an all-encompassing, generalized notion, holds revision to be an ongoing selecting/choosing activity that is unconstrained by boundaries of time within the overall writing endeavor. It is an activity which not only precedes the writing itself, but continues throughout and even after the effort. The second conception of revision is a linear one, interpreted in terms of "stage" models of the entire writing process. And the third viewpoint is one which sees revision as a pulsing, recursive, cyclical activity in which the original writing and the ongoing revision are never entirely distinguishable.

It may be that if the theory of revision develops into a single cohesive model in the future, we will judge in retrospect that the three current conceptions have been different only semantically. Nevertheless, I think it is helpful, if only to appreciate the richness of the revision process, to examine these three conceptions separately, and briefly, before we consider the practical aspects of teaching the skill.

Revision as ongoing, nonlinear activity. This first conception of revision suggests that revising involves replacing a less desirable element of the writing with a better one--a better idea, a better construction, a better word--as do the other descriptions of the process. However, proponents of this interpretation stress that the richness of writers' ideas, their command of a repertoire of constructions, their ample vocabulary, are at their disposal at every moment their consciousness is directed to the writing endeavor. For this group of theorists and practitioners, revision is a set of habitual selecting/choosing behaviors rather than a time-specific, object-focused, activity. As Donald Graves (1979) suggests, "Revision begins when children choose their own topics. Children who quickly arrive at a number of topics, [who] learn to exclude some topics and write on others, are learning to revise" (p. 318). Another theorist, Nancy Sommers (1980), believes that "a piece of writing is never finished, just abandoned" (p. 384).

Revision as a linear process. The second conception of the revision

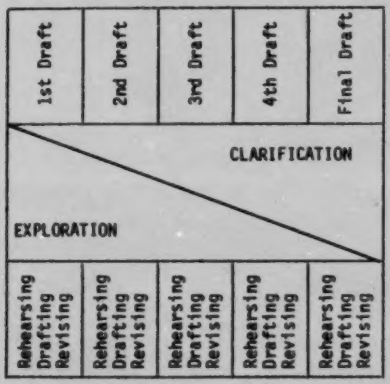
process places this component of composing within one of the linear models for the entire writing process (for example, prewriting-writing-rewriting or prevision-vision-revision). In these models, writing is a process of stages. Revision, as one of the writing stages, has its own place and time; it is what one does after writing or, in some schemes, before editing.

These linear conceptions of the writing process (and consequently, of revision as a stage of that process) are essentially adaptations of classical models for spoken rhetoric. They include not only Rohman's prewriting-writing-rewriting model, but also Britton's conception-incubation-production version. They reflect the idea that language is fundamentally a spoken activity, and that writing is actually just a symbolization of the spoken communication. Revision, then, in this second conception, is a focused activity which is identifiable as a specific stage within a linear model for the entire writing process.

Revision as a recursive process. Nancy Sommers is a chief proponent of this third conception of revision. She feels that it is inappropriate to base theories of the writing process on those describing spoken language, because speech, by its very nature, cannot be revised, only added to. Thus, linear models for writing reduce revision to an afterthought, make it redundant. What is produced by such models, according to Sommers, is a parody of writing: "Isolating revision and then disregarding it plays havoc with the experience composition teachers have of the actual writing and rewriting of experienced writers" (p. 379). It is the possibility of revision that distinguishes the written text from the spoken word.

Both Donald Murray and Nancy Sommers propose that revision is a recursive process. Murray (1980) stresses the importance of remembering that writing is a process of interaction, not a series of logical steps. He uses the terms rehearsing, drafting, and revision to indicate its distinct aspects (pp. 4-5). Each draft must be an exercise in discovery, as the writer interacts with the draft. The diagram below illustrates what Murray is saying about this rehearsing-drafting-revising process.

The Process of Discovering Meaning
(1980, p. 6)



Another aid to understanding this third conception of revision is Sommers' research on how experienced writers describe their own revising procedures. As one of these writers says:

> I rewrite as I write. It is hard to tell what is a first draft because it is not determined by time. In one draft, I might cross out three pages, write two, cross out a fourth, rewrite it, and call it a draft. I am constantly writing and rewriting. I can only conceptualize so much in my first draft--only so much information can be held in my head at one time; my rewriting efforts are a reflection of how much information I can encompass at one time. There are levels and agenda which I have to attend to in each draft. (Sommers, 1980, pp. 383-384)

What this quotation indicates is the recursive movement--back and forth--that occurs during the writing process.

These, then, are the three major conceptions of revision identifiable in the current literature: revision as a set of general selecting/choosing habits; revision as a distinct stage within a linear model of the entire writing process; and revision as a recursive writing/rewriting dialectic.

Student theory of revision. So what is a student theory of revision? Nancy Sommers has conducted numerous case studies, with Ronald Schleifer, of students' revision patterns--inquiring how students prefer to define revision and analyzing their actual revision procedures. Sommers reminds us of what we all know--that writing should communicate. Fair enough, sounds good! She is discovering and documenting what most of us have learned by experience--students think that to compose is to communicate. Students are not discovering meaning as they write; once they have written something, they assume they have meaning, that they have communicated.

Student revision in this framework becomes cosmetic at best. Their own descriptions of revision reveal that the aim of this activity is to clean up speech. Students attend primarily to word matters: repetition, redundancy, "using better words and eliminating words that are not needed" (Sommers, 1980, p. 381). The students think that what is needed to finish the writing is to follow a fixed procedure--get some better words and phrases. The process is known, predetermined; there is nothing to be discovered, only the given expression to be improved.

In summary, students revising written work carry out the operations of deleting, substituting, adding, and reordering, but they do these things at the superficial level of words and phrases, rather than at the level of larger units of language--sentences, paragraphs, themes, ideas.

Implications of revision theories for teaching. How then, do we--as practicing writers ourselves, as teachers of young writers--teach a variety of revision strategies? First of all, we come in as models of persons actively engaged in writing, giving evidence that revision is not a sign of deficiency, but a part of the creative process. We come in as persons who not only have a workable set of strategies to revise our own writing, but who also have a sizable repertoire of suggestions from which students can devise their own effective revision styles. We come into the students' lives with great influence, because we empower them to claim the complete process of writing in ways that enhance their self-esteem and motivation.

The theories of revision presented earlier in this paper and the operational definitions of students have numerous, and rather obvious, implications for us practitioners of writing instruction. For example, what does the standard "content/mechanics" grade at the top of a piece of writing convey to students? As we reflect on it, perhaps the reverse of what we really want to say to them. Doesn't the "content/mechanics" label say, "Get your thought together, kid, and then clean it up"?

Too many too-facile suggestions from a teacher's "recipes" can also be deleterious. Sommers discusses the use/abuse of exhortations such as "think before you write," "you need a thesis statement," "outline your paper first," "try the thesaurus," and "now it's time to polish it." The mode of teacher presentation of these matters is critically important; early experience with revision strategies defines for the students whether such strategies belong to the teacher or, in fact, to them. We teachers can certainly stimulate concern for the larger goals of the writing process by emphasizing the discovery, the re-seeing, involved in the revising.

In essence, we teachers need a repertoire of revision strategies to share with students because the students need them. I have compiled an assortment of such strategies in the next section of this project. The place to start in practice is not, obviously, to acquire another ready list. The place to start is to have an operative belief in writing as a process, something that allows the students to journey in thought and writing for themselves. Lucy McCormick Calkins (1979) describes revision as "a tribute to the potential in a piece" (p. 751). Of course, not every piece has potential, calls for revision. But our job as teachers is to learn to recognize the potential. Because students may not be aware of potential we must therefore be on the lookout for it. Murray (1978) leads us to view this potential as a motivating force for carrying out revision. He says that "revision--the process of seeing what you've said to discover what you have to say--is the motivating force within most writers. They are compelled to write to see what their words tell them" (p. 56). I find that a startling statement, one hard to believe and accept. Students will be compelled to revise? Murray says yes. The secret is to give students a chance to discover. Revision becomes an opportunity, not a punishment.

Opportunities for use of revision strategies in the classroom. The following offer possibilities for the learning and the coaching of revision strategies:

1. Revising a text together--as a class, using an overhead projector.
2. Conferences--student/student, student/peer group, student/parent, student/teacher. Writing, especially the revision of writing, is very dependent on the conference; here a piece gets an audience, a writer gets immediate feedback. Such an audience is not a critical person out there waiting to pounce, but someone in touch--keeping the ideas "cooking," the process working. This kind of arrangement--conferencing--urges, encourages, drives the writer to redo, to revise.
3. Prose models. I highly recommend the piece by Paul Eschholz (1980) in the bibliography. His procedure is to wait until a student has a problem (for example, lack of specificity). He then produces an appropriate text as a model for the student to read and to use as he is able.
4. Sentence combining. Sentence combining offers an excellent variety of revision strategies.
5. Written commentary. Hirsch (1977) feels that research will show the direct approach, if effectively done, will prove to be the most efficient teaching method of revision--and therefore, of writing.
6. Structured training programs. Rebekah Caplan's "Showing-Writing: A Training Program to Help Students Be Specific" is an example. Her approach gives me the most hope. I like its structure--relaxed enough for variety in the kinds of writing and in the follow-up activities (for example, sentence combining, use of quotations), and yet tight enough so that students don't lose track of a fundamental principle of good writing. With this kind of program the students aren't overwhelmed, aren't trying to tackle all sorts of writing problems simultaneously. The program helps them perceive one thing: showing-writing! It helps them in viewing their work to shift from writer to reader. Caplan's approach offers students a real chance to learn an effective revision strategy.

Odell and Cohick (1975) offer another such program in "You

P.S. 30

Mean Write it Over in Ink?" They describe a six-weeks' unit in which they gave ninth graders specific tools to help them evaluate and revise their rough drafts. The program included sessions dealing with identifying questions not answered in a piece of writing, visual focus, physical context, causal and time sequences, and others. Like Caplan's, this program seems to have real promise.

7. Revision guides--written checklists or procedures for students to use on their own pieces or for use in student/student, student/group, and student/teacher conferences. I suggest consideration of Michael C. Flanigan and Diane S. Menendez's (1980) approach. Among the revision guides which I came upon in my research, I find their system to be the most adaptable for students of varying levels of reading and analytic ability. They emphasize looking for good features of the writing and making specific suggestions for improvement. For instance, in looking at another student's narrative, the peer reviewer follows instructions like these: "First, read the opening paragraph(s) of the paper. STOP. Below, jot down several words or phrases which indicate what feelings and meanings or ideas you get from the paragraph. What feelings/meanings do you think the writer wants you to get from the opening? CIRCLE any words or phrases you think need to be elaborated upon, places where a reader wants the writer to add more detail or be more specific to increase the reader's understanding . . . BRACKET words, phrases, sentences that you think are especially well-done or important . . ." (1980, pp. 257-258).

   This system has great potential for classroom use: students become conscious that "writing is for reading"; the elements of good writing are experienced as identifiable and amenable to change; and the peer group is called to accountability for the time spent in the conferencing. This latter payoff alone should recommend this system to every elementary and secondary writing teacher!

8. Disaster workshop. This suggestion by Nancy Dworsky (1980) sounds like a good change of pace. She and her poetry class decided "to bring in disasters--poems that we could not make work as we wanted them to, nor could we throw them away as total losses. . . . A student, then, comes to class eager to benefit from criticism, instead of being eager for praise. This differs from the usual situation where someone reads a work he feels finished with. Then he wants it accepted, not torn up and handed back for reconstruction" (p. 194).

A general revision checklist. The following revision checklist is from English Journal, and I think it offers some good general guidelines easily adapted to any level. The brief commentary accompanying the list you might find helpful, too.

1. Don't bind yourself to your original intention.
   Writing is an act of discovery. Once the material is down on paper in rough draft form, it may be necessary for the writer to revise his original intention and work with the intention of the language he has set down.

2. Nothing is sacred.
   No matter how provocative an image or a phrase or a word may seem to the writer, he must keep in mind that anything can be deleted or altered to achieve clear writing.

3. Look for the beginning, middle, and end, anywhere.
   The beginning may come where the ending is; the end may be what the writer thought was the middle; and the middle could be anywhere. The writer must discover through revision where these elements are and not assume that his first choice was the correct one.

4. Be aware of the mixed associations of words.
   Different words mean different things to different people. The

writer must make the best possible word choice and be aware of the different possibilities of meaning of words.

5. Keep your usage and punctuation straight.
No matter what form the writer is working in, the standards of usage apply and must be kept in mind. On punctuation: just as bad word choice can mislead the reader, so can bad or incorrect punctuation confuse the writing (Weigl, 1976, p. 68).

For elementary teachers especially. Some references offer suggestions that are particularly helpful at the elementary level.

1. The Summary of Preliminary Findings on Revision is taken from one such excellent resource, "Research Update: What Children Show Us About Revision," by Donald H. Graves. I recommend the entire article.

2. In ". . . Stand Up, Sit Down, Write, Write, Write!" Peter M. Schiff (1979) brings together composition theory and developmental psychology (Piaget, Vygotsky, Britton, Emig). His frame of reference is sixth graders but his techniques and many practical suggestions can easily be adapted to any level. He lists activities that require physical involvement and manipulation. He also notes that activities which may appear to be time wasters--pacing, fidgeting, chewing pencils, doodling--are, in reality, "crucial to sincere, vital expression." He argues "that a pile of discarded, mutilated paper is a sign of a maturing writer . . . illustrating a writer's desire to revise" (p. 754).

3. A good companion piece to Schiff is Lucy McCormick Calkins' "Learning to Throw Away." According to Calkins, "Inclusion in order to exclude" describes not only the writing process but also a developmental sequence. She makes theory come alive by tracing the change and growth in the writing process of Rebecca from ages five to ten. Here's an example. When Rebecca was in the second grade, her "stories were unfolding as she wrote. One word tumbled into the next, with each incident sparking off another. [A sample of Rebecca's writing is given.] Everything is included at this developmental stage. Rebecca has progressed from letters to words, from words to phrases and episodes. Now she strings these together. This is the familiar stage when children describe television programs by telling every minute, irrelevant detail. They link episodes together on a string of ands. They ramble on and on and on through their account until finally, impatient of listening, we say, 'What was the main point of the program? I don't need to hear everything; just give me the gist of it.' What we don't realize is that children at this stage are not developmentally able to see the main point of a story" (pp. 750-751). This article makes for engaging reading; anyone interested in how maturing in revision parallels children's psychological and academic development will wish to study it.

I Search for Lively Writing

Dorothy S. Birchfield

NOTICE

THE MANAGEMENT REGRETS THAT IT HAS COME TO THEIR ATTENTION THAT EMPLOYEES DYING ON THE JOB ARE FAILING TO FALL DOWN.

THIS PRACTICE MUST STOP, AS IT BECOMES IMPOSSIBLE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN DEATH AND NATURAL MOVEMENTS OF THE STAFF.

THEREFORE, ANY EMPLOYEE FOUND DEAD IN AN UPRIGHT POSITION WILL BE DROPPED FROM THE PAYROLL!

--no source given

This little gem appeared in my school mailbox last winter, a gift from one of those salesmen who spread Xeroxed goodies (some more polite than others) over the countryside. Since that time it has hung on my refrigerator door to remind me that if I am alive, I should act so. I shall be forever glad that I kept it because as I was trying to write this paper for the third time, NOTICE caught my eye. Finally, I realized that above anything else I want my writing and that of my students to be alive and full of action.

For years I have believed I should hide my students' writings. Oh, I loved to read some of them, but if I showed them to anyone, I was embarrassed about the mechanical errors. After all, students who are well-taught would say those marvelous, compact, funny things but with perfect punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. There would be no red markings because I would have found out how to make small-size adults of them, adults who could write with the clear-eyed candor and innocence of a child and yet the correctness of an adult. Sometimes I would read the writings to the children or other teachers or parents, but I didn't show them unless I rewrote them, because they weren't perfect. But then I read Macrorie's Uptaught (1970) where he says, "The student gets the idea. 'All those corrections show he's more interested in my spelling than in what I say. So I won't bother to say anything I really mean'" (p. 71). Now I intend to receive and accept children's work with more understanding.

I can read once more the books my second grade students wrote about Zippy, the "wiener hound" that they took home overnight, writing about the experience the next day. I wonder how their original writings appeared before I rewrote them in smaller manuscript, three to a page to save the school district money. I rejoice that I did learn to value their own writing, carefully corrected by them and illustrated with their own pictures, in the following years with new animals to spark new interest--Pepper, Wilbur, Tigger, Tuffy, Templeton, and Thumper. Even though they are full of my errors, I still will keep the writing of those seven years because they talk to me of the joys of teaching second grade.

Small collections of cartoons with short captions and comic strips were my next venture with student writing as I taught fourth grade students the next five years. They were too old for a stuffed animal and cartoons seemed close to their interests and abilities. Then, over the past seven years, I have tried many ways to encourage writing--a branch planted in plaster which sprouted poems (a poet-tree), autobiographies, story starters, and letters for free materials.

This summer's experience at the Ohio Writing Project has led me to search for a writing program that will allow my students and me to grow in our writing as well as to allow me to feel that the tasks of reading, evaluating, and publishing are manageable for me in my teaching situation. That is my intention.

In reading Peter Elbow's Writing Without Teachers (1973) I became acquainted with "free writing, journal writing, and the teacherless writing class." Surely any new program I develop must include these. Free writing should encourage fluency, journal writing will help reach honest feelings, and the response groups will help young writers to feel the audience reaction. I am eager to try to incorporate these on a regular basis in my class.

Several theorists have helped me formulate my new curriculum. From James N. Britton (1970) I learned new terms for kinds of writing--writing in the role of participant or spectator--and the continuum of

Transactional----------Expressive----------Poetic .
(Participant) (Spectator)

Most of elementary-school writing falls into the expressive mode of the spectrum with occasional ventures into the two extremes. If I have the children write often, they will risk trying all kinds of writing.

James Moffett's "I, You, and It" (1965) describes "four stages of discourse" as a continuum from thinking to speaking to writing to publishing, the controlling factor distance between speaker and audience. He also mentions "two abstractive progressions--one in which the speaker's audience becomes more remote and diffused over time and space, and another in which the speaker's subject becomes less and less matter and more and more idea" (p. 246). Moffett even presents a specific order for students' writing: "all kinds of real and invented interior monologues, dramatic monologues, dialogues, plays, letters, diaries, fragments of autobiographies, eye-witness accounts, reporters-at-large (modeled on those in The New Yorker), case studies, first and third person fiction, essays of generalization and essays of logical argumentation" (p. 247). Later in this paper, I will try to adapt activities which I know have worked in my previous classrooms to Moffett's order.

As I reflect on what I have taught before, I find that many of my beliefs about children's writing are based on solid research. Piaget's and Vygotsky's schemes of intellectual development are for growth "from self to world, from a point to an area, from a private world of egocentric chatter to a public universe of discourse," according to Moffett (p. 246). My students have written about themselves, about real things close to themselves and experiences of their own.

Lester Golub (1975) said "that is what writing is all about, discovering our inner voice and expressing it in such a way, with language, that it stimulates some sort of sensitive creative response in the listener or the reader" (p. 71). If the students, led by the teacher, share their comments and understanding, then they may later with confidence face some partial failure together. Of such sharing is learning made.

How does the person experience things? Through his senses, of course. Sensory impressions are at first very concrete from real sights, smells, tastes, touches, and sounds. At the primary level the child is asked to record what he sees, hears, feels, tastes, or smells. Student writing is like a "shopping list" according to Haggitt (1967) with not much order or planned presentation. As the child matures there is more grouping of all the thoughts about one subject--the birds or the river, for example. Next the student may be able to draw on a memory of a similar experience and even imagination. Haggitt's direct experiences led through discussion and sketches to vivid, colorful writing.

In Wishes, Lies, and Dreams, Kenneth Koch (1970) provides an excellent sensory exercise. He describes using an add-a-line method for a collective poem (no rhyme), each line to begin with the words, "I wish," and containing a color. The children were able to share some of their private world without concern for being best--they were all a part of the whole poem. Koch's other ideas used repetition of a word or words, and comparison (simile and metaphor,

E.634

though not named) in every line. "A poetry idea should be easy to understand, it should be immediately interesting, and it should bring something new into the children's poems" (p. 14). All of the senses can be used this way--a tasting party, a perfume sampling, a taping of strange but familiar sounds, old things in new colors, hidden textures for touching. Other suggestions are to use "I Used To/But Now . . .," and to assume crazy roles like the floor of a house, or a bicycle wheel, and to write the lie poem about things that might be but really aren't. "I seem to be, but really I am . . ." (p. 27).

In yet another sensory aid, Alexander Frazier (1970) in "Developing a Vocabulary of the Senses" lists hundreds of words for each sense for children to use in writing about their experiences. Examples are these: Sound--bellow, chant, croak, giggle, jangle, and trill; Sight--brilliant, dusky, freckled, mottled, smeared, and transparent; Touch--bumpy, crawly, lifeless, moist, prickly, and slimy; Taste--acid, curdled, honeyed, peppery, sugary, and vinegary; and Smell--bouquet, deodorant, incense, pungent, putrid, and stench. He gives no suggestions for use but mentions that words should not be the product of the experience but that they may help in the process of writing.

Richard Larson (1971) suggests that in addition to expressive writing of students' experiences and feelings, there should be some teaching of writing to an audience such as "notes on a meeting, letters to parents, instructions to delivery men," and cards recommending favorite books to others who might enjoy them. Using such audience-centered assignments, we can show upper-intermediate students that their writing can bring about action or change beliefs.

One device I use for developing vocabulary is word play--visual puns, puzzle of the day, Hink-Pinks (in newspapers they are called Wordy-Gurdy). See examples:

Visual Pun: ECN A LG
(backward glance)

Puzzle of the Day: 8D. - 24H. = 1W.
(Eight days minus twenty-four hours equals one week.)

Making games of glossary words, spelling lists, or almost any group of words may set off a discussion of what funny things words are. Word order can also cause some amusing mixups. Work on this leads to a study of sentence structure and somehow we are back to writing.

When a teacher lectures to the class about any subject, there is doubt about who is learning, but especially when a teacher talks about the future, the students seem caught in a fog of uncertainty with no power to imagine themselves in so distant a circumstance. I use Sidney Simon's "Epitaph" and "Lifeline" activities to make a child's life seem more concrete to that child--something that has beginning and end--the end not being filled in yet. I compare it to what they might write in a yearbook ten years or twenty or thirty years from now. The results are amusing, and enlightening to both them and me. Students tell each other about when they learned to walk and talk, to swim or ride a bike, to skate on rollers or ice, to play the piano, football, or chess, and soon their ten or twelve years of life are full of accomplishments. At that high point of self-concept, it makes sense to encourage dreams of what other things they may achieve in the next ten to twelve years. I hope to convince them that many more doors are open to them than they had previously realized. When they write about their ambitions they are more aware of some of the steps they will need to take in order to reach their goals. I can also depend on them to see that maybe a girl should think of the person she wants to be before she becomes someone's mother.

I have never enjoyed grading students' writings because it seemed I was so busy correcting spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, etc., that I completely missed the point of what they were saying. Sometimes the paper looked so butchered by red marks I couldn't face the student with it. At other times I was writing comments so fast I made a mistake in spelling or chose the wrong words! Horrors! What should I do--cross out or rewrite? Messy! So as a result I often just kept the stack of red splotched papers. I had practiced my spelling and grammar rules, I had learned and relearned how to make a sentence complete, but my students hadn't experienced any of this good stuff. So I decided to write letters. My idea was that instead of marking their efforts, I could answer their questions, read their suggestions, and establish communication! I promised not to correct, but to listen and consider their writing, responding to them in one week's time. Once a month I required a letter by asking about three happenings at school that month. I hoped that my letter would serve as a model for form (heading, greeting, paragraphs, and closing) and I thought the sentences might improve and . . . There I go again hoping for perfection.

This exchange has allowed me to know my students better, to get suggestions for activities they enjoy and to present myself to them as a person with deadlines, homework, and home life. Each of these activities has been rewarding, but I did not really follow an organized plan for the improvement of student writing. Indeed, as I look back over these years my instruction seems pretty spotty! Perhaps this was because my own writing instruction had been so, too.

The activity which has cemented a trusting relationship between me and my students has been a monthly letter exchange with me. I began the year by writing a dittoed letter for all asking about the earthquake, floods, and storms during the last summer. Where were the students during these natural, potential disasters? I asked them to tell me things they like or don't like, things that they have trouble with or that they are great at, what is different or the same old thing. I described the form of a letter and promised not to correct or grade them. This was to be for the purpose of getting to know each other.

In planning my writing program for sixth graders I should like to begin by asking them to share some experience with the class. (In thinking how to tell something, it would seem to me that the interior monologues would have been prepared--free thinking to free writing.) When the listeners ask for points to be clarified, we would have dialogue. I would plan a "dialogue" assignment with one of the characters in a reading assignment. What would you tell Tom Sawyer or Huckleberry Finn? How would he answer you?

The next step in the sequence is "letters." Letters may be written to companies for free materials, to relatives, and to me.

"Diaries" or journals would allow for many of the previous tasks to be repeated in spiral fashion--that is, progressing in difficulty or completeness, allowing for practice which is so necessary in most learning schemes.

From student interviews with parents I would try to draw the writing of "fragmentary autobiographies." I believe this kind of interaction within the family makes for warm feelings and elevated self-concept as they share the memories of the first step, first word, first tricycle, first pet, etc. Sometimes illnesses or family changes have had a profound effect and this discussion seems to help.

An "eye-witness account" will be the next assignment. Perhaps an incident on the bus, in the shopping mall, or at a football game would be a chance for the student to show with words the event and just how all the participants and spectators seemed to be feeling.

Now comes evaluation. I plan to use some comparative rating methods

where students' writings are divided into various levels of competency according to the purpose of the writings, working on one or two kinds of improvement at a time. Groups of students with similar needs could work together or I might try response groups of mixed abilities. Grades may be derived from points specified in the assignment, agreed upon in advance, but not on every paper. I realize now that the writing process needs practice without fear of grading--on my part or my students.

I have searched for techniques of teaching writing that will lead me to help children to enjoy writing. Perhaps it's like toothpaste--if it feels good, maybe they'll do it longer and more often. Maybe I will, too.

Writing as a Learning Process

MaryBeth Connors

Writing Is Learning

Writing has traditionally been taught in English courses. Teachers in other discipline areas often ignore the need to help students develop writing skills. Some claim that the teaching of writing is strictly the job of the English teacher. Some think that writing is not a necessary communication skill in their classroom. Still other non-English teachers see the value of writing, but feel that they lack the necessary skills to teach writing. Others are pressed for time when trying to teach the content of their discipline.

Whatever the reason, it is a shame more non-English teachers do not use writing. Recent research indicates that writing may be a useful tool for teaching many subjects. Writing is active not passive learning. By writing, students must actively participate in the learning process. Unlike memorization and other rote methods, which assist in short-term learning, writing allows long-term learning to take place. Writing, because it actively involves the student, fulfills a long-term learning need.

Writing is a series of overlapping composing processes: generating new ideas, making plans, revising, editing, and proofreading. When students are actively involved in the composing process, they discover new ideas. In effect, writing is a way to end up thinking something you couldn't have started out thinking (Elbow, 1973, p. 15). Writing can engage you in a constant rehearsal necessary for the successful integration of new material into old.

Even long-term learning can be aided when old or existing facts are constantly being used. Emig (1977), for example, notes that writing allows us to have our ideas immediately available for review and re-evaluation, a process that can lead us to reconsider and refine our ideas, i.e., to learn what we think by writing. Writing can also enhance self-realization and self-knowledge. Writers can begin to explore the gray areas of their minds and learn to know their feelings, emotions, and thoughts more intimately. In these ways, writing also leads to power. What other communication skill offers such endless learning possibilities for students?

Janet Emig states that "writing represents a unique mode of learning--not merely valuable, not merely special, but unique." James Britton argues that the act of writing is one means by which we come to understand what we have read or seen or heard. In other words, writing generates knowledge.

Using Social Studies as a Model for Writing Across the Curriculum

Social studies is just one of the many disciplines in which writing skills may be fostered. In social studies, writing enhances subject matter learning. As Girou (1979) comments:

> The importance of having students write, rather than write about, social studies topics, concepts, and content rests on the assumption that by so doing students will learn about the process of learning itself and therefore will be able to think more critically about the content under study. (p. 190)

Writing would seem to be a logical task in social studies for a variety of reasons. First of all, social studies gives writers endless topics and resources to draw upon. Secondly, most teachers in this discipline already

38

use writing to a certain extent. The existing writing can be extended to different types of assignments which can further students in their development. And thirdly, writing in the social studies can give birth to new and additional information. As Beyer and Brostoff (1979) note, writing can facilitate learning in the social studies class:

> As students write about social studies or history, they think about these subjects. In so doing they not only develop new insights into these subjects, but they also practice and refine the widest possible range of cognitive skills. (p. 176)

What must social studies teachers keep in mind when assigning writing to students? Most importantly, writing tasks must advance from simple to complex. Teachers must keep in mind that the simplest writing task is the one closest to the writers' experiences, and the most complex is the one in which writers must abstract themselves from the experience. Teachers must decide upon a starting point and slowly advance the students from that point. One way would be to follow James Britton's three levels of writing, moving from narrative to generalization, and then to theoretical writing. This is a logical progression from writing about what is happening to tying this information together with a generalization to developing hypotheses and deductions (Britton, 1975).

Teachers must remember that students will become frustrated and thwarted when an assignment is beyond their mental capabilities. Yet, when pupils have mastered a certain level of competency in writing, they often welcome the challenge.

Social studies teachers, like other writing teachers, must build good writing assignments. These must contain a clearly stated task, provide an audience, and break the writing process into small steps.

Social studies teachers must teach prewriting and rewriting. The teachers should skim the first draft and give students some feedback. After the first draft is satisfactory to student and teacher, the students should begin rewriting--revising their writing style, improving their thoughts and ideas, and evaluating the extent to which their goals were accomplished.

When the rewriting has been accomplished, a conventional editing session is advisable. Editing is the process of checking punctuation, spelling, and grammar. Oftentimes, this can best be accomplished by the use of a teacher-made checklist.

Another useful technique is peer evaluation, which allows students to learn from each other, without direct teacher guidance. Students can read their papers aloud to peer groups or exchange papers in order to receive positive and constructive feedback. Teacher-prepared checklists are invaluable here.

Evaluation of writing skills can be a difficult, time-consuming task for teachers. For this reason, they must sometimes limit themselves to a holistic approach, that is, judging papers based on a whole impression.

When actually grading student papers, teachers should remember that the comments will condition and prepare students for their next writing assignment. Piercing, negative comments or approving, positive comments will alter a student's thinking about himself. Students will often live up to the expectations of teachers. So, it is best to write short, positive comments. Instead of explaining what students did incorrectly, ask questions at the appropriate trouble spots. If a paper is in need of serious help at many points, focus on the most necessary skills, giving students realistic goals.

APPENDIX

Examples of Creative Writing Assignments in Social Studies

I. Letter Writing
This is a personal assignment which reinforces the parts of a letter and allows the student to write to a specific audience.

Specific Assignments

A. Write a letter to a friend, teacher, or parent.

B. Write a letter to a newspaper editor, politician, author, or celebrity, stating one's opinion about a topic.

C. Write a letter as if you are a famous person during a particular era in history.
Examples:
1. George Washington as the first U.S. President
2. Abraham Lincoln as a young lawyer
3. Franklin D. Roosevelt when he contracted polio
4. John Glenn as an astronaut

D. Write a letter home as if you are a typical citizen during a specified historical era.
Examples:
1. A pioneer in the Old Northwest
2. A Confederate soldier during the Civil War
3. An American gold miner during the California Gold Rush
4. An American doughboy during World War I

II. Writing a Class Newspaper
Each student must write an article to appear in the newspaper. This type of project should only be attempted after the students have studied and read on a regular basis their hometown newspaper. After the varied articles have been written, the students should recopy their article on ditto carbons, in order to distribute the copies to other classes, parents, and friends.

Specific Assignments

A. Write a factual newspaper article containing the five W's. (Who, What, Where, When, Why)

B. Have students write one of the following articles: local news story, state news story, national or international news story, entertainment article, sports article, editorial, letter to the editor, classified ad.

C. Draw a political cartoon with a caption.

D. Students may wish to create a newspaper which does not deal with the present. A particular year or a specific date from the past can create endless learning possibilities.

III. Play writing
Play writing allows the student to study a character and the particular customs and habits of a particular era. The writing of a play is usually very successful when accomplished in small groups. Each student can "become" a specific character by writing the lines of his chosen character. This activity reinforces the form of a play, role playing, and group dynamics. One-act plays are most successful.

IV. Journal Writing
Keeping a journal allows a student to use his untapped imagination. It leads to endless self-knowledge and self-realization.

Specific Assignments

A. A pioneer settling in a wilderness.
B. A soldier fighting a war in a foreign country.
C. A person exploring new territory. (A vacation in a new city, state, or country)
D. A twentieth-century citizen visiting the past or future.

V. Rewriting

This activity gives the student an opportunity to rewrite in his own words historic documents.

Specific Assignments

A. Rewrite the Preamble to the Declaration of Independence, Preamble to the Constitution, Gettysburg Address, Amendments to the Constitution, or the President's State of the Union address.

VI. Interviewing

In this exercise, the teacher chooses a historic personage. The role playing of the historic character can be done by the teacher, or possibly by a well-studied student. After reviewing interviewing skills, students are to compose a series of interview questions. These questions are to be asked in the typical news conference setting. At the conclusion of the mock interview, the students are to write a factual newspaper article.

Possible Impersonations

A. Amelia Earhart
B. Dolly Madison
C. Richard Nixon

VII. Writing about photos, posters, or paintings

Students can learn much by reading pictures, photos, or paintings. A simple exercise is to ask the student to write about the picture.

Specific Questions

A. Describe the scene.
B. What is the photographer or painter trying to portray?
C. What would you be doing if you were in the photo or painting?
D. Describe objects, customs, or scenery which proves the historical setting of the photo.

VIII. Evening news or Sixty Minutes

Students must write a script for a segment of a news program. Added enjoyment will abound if the news broadcast is videotaped. Again, present or past dates may be used.

Specific Topics

A. Main news event of the day
B. Weather report
C. Sports
D. Network opinion

IX. Miscellaneous Writing

Specific Examples

A. Social issue in school
B. Pros/cons on an issue
C. Summary of a field trip
D. Interviewing
E. Local historical writings
F. Captions to cartoons
G. Biography
H. Autobiography
I. Poetry
J. Minutes from a town meeting or a school board meeting
K. Advertisements, commercials

The Composing Process

Katherine Kauflin

William Irmscher (1979) says, "We assume anyone who can write can teach writing, but we seldom even know whether the teacher can write . . ." (p. 8). Few teachers have ever had courses that prepare them to write, and, according to Janet Emig (1971), "have no direct experience of a process they purport to present to others" (p. 98).

A. Y. Maya (1979) further suggests that teachers will not be able to help students write well until they themselves write and discover what the process means (p. 814). Most rely on what Irmscher calls "trial and error writing," and they "hit every chuckhole along the way" (p. 3). They avoid the teaching of writing as much as possible and teach it only when the curriculum or their conscience dictates. They are not teaching their students how to write better but are merely expecting them to. They do not teach them how to because they do not know how to teach them to write better. As Irmscher says, they "merely go through the motions" (p. 14).

Many teachers are too busy trying to stay abreast of their paper load to read the wealth of research on the composition process and discover that knowledge of this process is a probable solution to their problems. It is not a cure-all; however, I think that most will find that by knowing about the writing process they cannot only help their students to write better and more easily, but also reduce their paper load. Teachers may be gratified by the interest the stages of the process would generate in their students. The students will not only ask questions about the things that the teachers have been trying to teach them, but the "hands-on experience" of going through stages of writing will help the students write better. The teachers will also find fewer graded papers flying into "hangar thirteen" once the students have looked at the grade.

In a writing class based on the composition process, the student and the teacher face the task of making meaning together. Murray (1980) says: "They find where they are going as they get there" (p. 13). It is a process created to help teachers stress principles of clear, coherent, on-paper communication (Smelstor, 1978c, p. 2). Instead of focusing on the end product, emphasis is placed on the process involved in creating the product. Elbow (1973) sums it up best when he says that we should think of writing, "not as a way to transmit a message but as a way to grow and cook a message" (p. 15).

Applebee (1979) notes that when writing is examined as a process, stages emerge. These stages are very distinct, yet they blend and overlap, according to Murray (p. 4). Different theorists have various names or labels for those three stages; however, the most widely accepted ones are the following: prewriting, writing, and postwriting (Koch and Brazil, 1978, p. xi).

Prewriting, or rehearsing as Donald Murray calls it, is perhaps one of the most important stages of the process (p. 4). It is in this stage of the writing process that the ideas are generated. This stage consumes 85 percent of the time spent in the writing process (Lundsteen, 1976, p. 285). Time spent here lessens the time spent in the other two stages.

Prewriting begins with the creation of an atmosphere in which students can and will write. It is called prewriting because it begins before the students start to write (Smelstor, p. 1). It begins with activities that help students become more relaxed about writing, which in turn helps them overcome the psychological barriers that prevent them from doing their best writing (Irmscher, pp. 78-79).

Prewriting begins with the "old reliables of talking, reading, sharing of ideas, and by imitation" (Smelstor, p. 1). Informal writing also takes place in this stage of the writing process. Most of the writing done is what

Irmscher calls "informal scribbling and consists of lists, thoughts, journals, and outlines. It is a time of exploration and observing, of recording perceptions" (p. 78). A lot of freewriting, writing free of criticism, editing, and grading, is done at this stage (p. 82). Prewriting ends when the student determines the form his/her writing is going to take and what manner of organization is best suited to his/her audience and topic (Koch and Brazil, p. 25).

In the second phase of the writing process, the actual writing of the paper begins. It is in this stage that the information, knowledge, and ideas remove themselves from the writer (Murray, p. 5). The students need to determine the order of the material they are going to write about and make certain language choices. They don't have the problem of what to write about because this was generated in the first phase of the process. They may have some difficulty determining how to start; however, they must remember that this is a draft subject to change. They will have time provided in the next phase of the process to change and edit their work (Smelstor, p. 2).

The final stage of the writing process is postwriting. The term postwriting is a little deceptive because it might seem to someone unfamiliar with the writing process that the writing aspect of the process is completed. Not so. It is in this stage that writers have the opportunity to share and revise their work.

Most writers accept rewriting as part of the process. Too often in a classroom situation it is used as a means of punishment instead of being approached as an opportunity for discovery or as an inevitable part of the writing process (Murray, 1978a, p. 85). It is important that the students view the postwriting stage as a positive part of the composing process (Andreasen et al., 1980, p. 23).

Since writing is a transaction with other people, it is helpful for writers to experience the reaction of someone else to their writing, so it is in this stage that the writing is shared with others. Peer groups are formed with no more than five in a group. Murray feels that the writing should be shared orally because it frees the listener from concerns of penmanship, spelling, and mechanical errors (1980, p. 15).

The goal of this phase of postwriting is to determine, by reading the work out loud, how the work is experienced by others (Elbow, p. 78). It is here that the writer learns if his work is articulate. If the writer reads the work twice and pauses for at least a minute of silence between readings, the listener will usually be able to point out what is strong about the writing. He can also comment on what is unclear or what he as a reader would like to see developed more in the writing.

Once the response has been received by the writer, he can then go back to build and strengthen, to eliminate weak areas or perhaps clarify areas in his work that the responders felt needed clarification providing he felt the need to do this. The final decision about any changes that are to be made in a work rest with the writer.

After the work reads the way the writer wants it, he can duplicate his work and share it with his/her response group in a written form. They can assist the writer in proofreading, polishing, and editing.

When the editing is completed the composition process is complete. The writing has come a long way from that first kernel in the prewriting stage, and the student has very likely come a long way in improving his/her attitude about writing. I think when the teacher reads a set of papers that have gone through the composition process his/her students will be writing more.

In order to review the composition process, I have included an outline

of the process compiled by Carl Koch and James M. Brazil (p. xi). It is as follows:

Stages of the Composition Process

Prewriting

1. Experiencing

   Our response to someone or something leading to a desire to communicate, e.g., wanting to write a letter to the editor after reading an editorial with which one disagrees.

2. Discovering

   Identifying a topic and an audience. (Often what moves one to write is an audience.)

3. Making Formal Choices

   Selecting a form for the essay--narrative, opinion, description, etc.--and a form of organization.

Writing

4. Forming

   Arranging essay materials in line with choices in step three, e.g., in a narrative, writing in chronological order; or, in an opinion essay, writing a clear thesis statement to begin the essay.

5. Making Language Choices

   Selecting language appropriate to one's purpose and audience, e.g., deciding between formal or informal wording, selecting adjectives, etc.

6. Languaging

   The process of carrying out the language choices, e.g., if one is writing a formal analysis, using language that is factual and exact.

Postwriting

7. Criticizing

   Evaluation of the essay to determine if it reflects the choices made earlier in the composition process, e.g., Does my opinion essay have a clear thesis statement? Did I describe my examples well enough? Will my audience understand the words I used?

8. Proofreading

   How does the essay meet the external standards of one's audience: form, punctuation, neatness, spelling, etc.?

Sample Assignment

The assignment is to write an autobiography. It would be interesting for the teacher who has never used the composition process to have the

C.I. 44

students write an autobiography and file it away. Later they can take it out and compare it with the autobiography they wrote after studying the composition process.

The ten paragraphs that the students write are prewriting exercises that they should do before going on to the actual writing of the autobiography. In order to increase the fluency, I would suggest that this be a free-writing exercise.

Exercise #1: Who are you?

Fill in the blanks twenty times after the words "I am . . ." Now review what you have written. You may wish to go back and add more. Do you see any patterns developing in what you have written that will help you organize your writing? You may wish to share it with someone. (When students are writing something of a personal nature they have the option of whether or not they wish to share their work.) File your paper.

Exercise #2: How do others see you?

We can learn much about ourselves from the impressions held by at least ten significant people in your life; if you can list more, that's great.

My girlfriend/boyfriend sees me . . .
My father/mother sees me . . .
My brother/sister sees me . . .
My teachers see me . . .
My best friend sees me . . .

Do people that know you well see you differently from people that don't know you quite as well? Do adults see you differently than your peers? Look for patterns in what you have written to help you organize your thoughts. You may share what you have written. File your paper.

Exercise #3: What material things do you value?

What material things do you consider to be the essentials of your life? Imagine hearing the word "Fire!" and having just a few minutes to take a few things and evacuate your home. What possessions do you treasure? Assuming that other family members are safe, you may concentrate on material objects. List ten items quickly. Look at the list you have compiled. What can you learn about yourself from this list? Your writing may be shared and then filed.

Exercise #4: Six weeks to live.

How would you live the last six weeks of your life? Pretend that you are going to die in only six weeks. Because of the nature of your illness, you will not have diminished physical capacity until the final day of your life. You can do anything you choose during the next forty-two days. How would you live them? After you have written your paragraph, you may share it before filing it.

Exercise #5: Before I was twelve I met . . .

(Twelve was used because this assignment was prepared for freshmen.) Who was/were the most influential person(s) in your life before you were twelve? List some of the reasons you selected this/these individual(s). Be sure to describe the characteristics that influenced you. Perhaps it was a character you read about that influenced you. Take what you have written and share it. File your paper when you are finished.

Exercise #6: What was your most embarrassing moment?

Was your most embarrassing moment one that you could laugh about later, or were you absolutely mortified when it happened? How did it affect those around you when it happened, or does that matter? Take what you have written and share it if you wish. File your paper.

Exercise #7: Freedom: If I weren't a student, I would . . .

List and describe the interests you might pursue if you were out of school. Are there any particular reasons you have for pursuing these interests? After writing this information, share it with a classmate, and file it.

Exercise #8: Fears

What are you afraid of? Do things or people scare you? Are you afraid to go to a dance for fear of not being asked to dance? Are you afraid to ask someone out on a date for fear of being rejected? Are you afraid of failing a subject in school? If you wish, you may share your paper with someone before you file it.

Exercise #9: I wish I could change . . . I wouldn't change . . .

List several things that you would change about yourself physically, emotionally, socially, or spiritually, if any. Do the same with things you would not like to change. Share your paper if you would like to, and then you should put it on file.

Exercise #10: If I could change an incident in my life . . .

Begin by telling the time, place, and people involved. Tell what happened and how you would like to change the event. Tell how this change would make a difference in your life if you were able to alter the outcome. You might show how it solved a problem or how it created a new one. You may share it with a friend and then file.

These paragraphs could be used several ways. They could be used as journal entries; they could be used in the third person to describe a character in literature; or one could be used alone as a writing assignment. I have used this assignment as an independent study for one of my students who didn't need to study what the class was working on at one time or another.

After the paragraphs have been assembled, we determine the audience that the students will be writing for. This may vary within the class. Some students may wish to write this for open house, while others may not wish for someone that they don't know to read it. I feel that when they are writing something of a personal nature they should have this option.

Once they are fairly satisfied with their audience and form, they begin to write their paper. They may have up to a week to complete this stage of the process; we spent almost ten weeks on the prewriting phase since we did one exercise a week. When their papers are finished, we form response groups and enter into the third and final phase of the process. If they have objections to reading their writing because of the personal nature, I do not force it.

Before they submit their paper for evaluation, I ask them to go back and look at the first autobiography that they wrote before going through the composition process. I give them the option of handing either one of the two papers in for evaluation. Guess which one they chose.

Oral and Written Discourse: From Talking to Writing

Karen Randolph

"Writing is not talk written down." I read Barbara Kroll's sentence in utter disbelief. I continued reading: "While children have an innate capacity to acquire spoken fluency in their mother tongue, all evidence seems to suggest that there is no parallel innate capacity to express oneself in acceptable written form" (1979, p. 89). As I pondered these statements, my mind drifted back to an evening in May. I was sitting in my family room looking over the papers that my first grade children had written in class that day as an end-of-the-year, posttest exercise. The directions to the children had been simple enough, "Write a story about a cat. Write at least four sentences." The stories that the children had written and that I was now reading were appalling. Not one child had written more than four sentences, while many children had not written the required number. Many of the sentences did not make sense; and many others were not complete sentences. I had felt like a complete failure.

Just the previous September the language arts committee in my school had presented the faculty with a revised language arts curriculum, stressing that all teachers should be teachers of writing. Our task was to improve student writing skills. Along with the new curriculum guide, we were given pre- and posttests to test our success. I, however, had not taken this pronouncement seriously. I, after all, was a teacher of reading; I didn't have time to be a teacher of writing. As I looked over the test papers, I realized that I had no choice. I would have to be a teacher of writing, to make a conscious effort to help my first graders become better writers.

Never having had a course dealing with the "how to" of teaching writing, I was bewildered. I did not know how to go about the task of setting up a writing curriculum, so the first thing I did was to think out and write down my objectives.

That should not be too difficult. I knew, after looking at the meager amount of material that the children wrote, that I wanted my students to gain fluency, to increase the quantity of their writing. Furthermore, I wanted them to write coherently, clearly--expressing their thoughts in complete sentences.

But where was I to begin in setting up a program? As I sat deliberating, a sentence I had read years before flashed into my mind: "Writing is just talk written down." That statement jarred a note of discord and brought me back to the present and to the statements I had just read. Here is someone telling me that writing is NOT talk written down. If that is true then what is writing? How are writing and talking different? Can I use the oral language that children bring with them to school to help them learn to write? How do children learn to talk? Does that process have any implications for the way children learn to write?

Current research holds some answers. Zoellner (1969) states that "writing is thought on paper" (p. 269). Isn't that the same thing as talk written down? I read on. King (1980) says that there is a definite distinction between oral and written discourse, the difference based on the function of the two modes (p. 163). While speech is interpersonal--participatory and person-oriented--writing is ideational--referential and abstract, a means of organizing and expressing knowledge (1979, p. 248). Horowitz and Berkowitz (1967), on the other hand, see the differences between oral and written discourse as a result of the nature of the thought process rather than the nature of the mode. They describe the thought process of speech as looser, wordier, and more repetitive (p. 214) than the thought processes reproduced through written expression.

Thus two of my questions are answered. Writing is not talk written down, but thought written down. Furthermore, written and oral discourse differ in their function, mode of production, goals, and thought processes, but, can understanding these differences help in understanding the acquisition of writing skills? Contradicting Kroll's statement, Julia Falk (1979) says that it can:

> Writing is the written expression of language and speech is the oral representation of language; and if we can further assume that the modes are different but co-equal concrete means of expressing language, then we can hypothesize that whatever is known about acquisition of oral language might have implications for the learning of written language. (p. 436)

Vera Milz (1980) supports Falk's assumption with even further implications for education: "If a child can acquire meaningful and communicative oral language without talking lessons, that same child can relate to the printed forms of language without reading and writing lessons" (p. 180). Operating under these assumptions, we must assume that by involving children in oral language exercises, we will better help them acquire facility in written language.

These studies have broad implications for the classroom. We should expose students to many different kinds of language experience. We can begin by reading aloud to them from a variety of written materials, magazines, newspapers, and an array of children's literature, both prose and poetry. King (1980) supports this notion when she says, "exposure to an array of written language, especially to stories read aloud [helps children] learn through their ears the structure of written language" (p. 166).

Most important, perhaps, we must give children numerous opportunities to interact with language, by providing them with varied experiences within the classroom. Falk supports this approach when she says:

> . . . the acquisition of writing can not be taught in the traditional sense; it must be learned through the tacit internalization of patterns and principles that are acquired through extensive exposure to and practical experiences with the use of language. (p. 440)

Therefore, we don't need to provide experiences as much as to capitalize on those things that happen everyday to help children grow in their use of oral language. A loose tooth, a classroom visitor, a TV program we have viewed together are all ideas for discussion. By using the everyday experiences in the classroom, by reading aloud to a class, and by providing many opportunities for use of their oral language, we will be leading students to develop their written language.

Finally, then, we must use the oral language the children have and extend it to the written mode. King (1980) reports that an important step is made when children begin to sense that writing is different from speech. Children communicate their awareness of this difference by the change in the intonation of their voice and the style of their speech when they dictate sentences or stories. I have heard that change in my classroom. When we are having a discussion, the children's intonation and style are conversational, but when I ask that they say sentences for me to write on the board, their tone and style become formal. The change suggests that they have sensed the difference between oral and written discourse.

The transition from oral to written language is easier in a classroom atmosphere of trust and respect. Burrows says that an important element in producing good writers ". . . is the classroom atmosphere in which each individual knows his thoughts and feelings will be welcomed" (p. 27). The

atmosphere also has to be unhurried, so that children will have time to experiment freely and to get their ideas down on paper.

A number of activities foster growth in written language. Give each child a journal at the beginning of the year and plan a daily ten-minute writing period so that each student can write in his/her journal each day. Set up a center with mailboxes and encourage the children to write letters to one another.

An especially effective exercise is group experience stories. Talk about a common experience, and as children dictate, write their sentences on chart paper. After the chart story is completed, read the story aloud. Burrows supports this read-aloud practice.

When children have gained proficiency over the mechanics of penmanship, give them writing assignments that focus on reporting of events in the classroom and around school, writing letters to upper grade pen pals, and writing stories.

If we tap the relationships in oral and written language, we can help children become fluent and coherent writers. We can provide the kind of classroom Burrows describes:

> When children are fed a nourishing diet of experiences, when their underlying need for growth is being fulfilled, and when they are free to write naturally and joyously, they grow in writing power . . . (p. 43)

The children can learn to write as spontaneously, as freely, and as enthusiastically as they speak.

Creative Dramatics and Oral Interpretation

in the Composing Process

D. Jean Knabe

Dorothy Heathcote (1978), British advocate of the use of creative drama in the classroom, writes in "Of These Seeds Becoming: Drama in Education":

> Someone said, "Write me some words."
> I said, "Yes, if I can."
> "By a certain date," said that someone.
> "Yes, if I can," said I.
> The date is come. I am not ready, yet
> must fulfill the promise made.
> It has always been thus in "writing
> myself down" into print. (p. 1)

Dorothy Heathcote's words express the unvoiced cry of composition students who either feel they have no subject about which to write, or who write feebly and inadequately. Heathcote was a leader in suggesting that creative dramatics might be the heuristic procedure that would work best with such students, that would provide the foundation for their language development. Like Heathcote, James Moffett (1973), drawing on the recommendations of the 1966 Dartmouth Conference, indicates drama can be central to the teaching of English--spelling, grammar, and writing. In addition, Massey and Koziol (1978) suggest that drama fosters "wholesome emotional development, inner security, social cooperation, creative expression, critical thinking, concentration, physical poise, sensory awareness, basic skills, aesthetic sensibility" (p. 92).

The classroom "dramatic method" covers diverse types of drama, including mime, role-playing, and improvisation, as well as monologue, discussion, and literature-based drama, but not including formal stage productions.

Essentially, mime emphasizes movement, feeling, and reading nonverbally. Because mime is nonverbal, body movement takes on exaggerated importance. Good observation and an ability to "zero in" on the essentials are necessary to accurately express ideas, thoughts, feelings, and character with mime. Students are usually very creative in suggesting ideas for mime. Some favorites with my students have been:

*A student steps on a piece of sticky gum and it adheres to her foot.

*A group of students is seated in a roller coaster car and experience the ride.

*A student received a telegram with either good or bad news.

*Two students perform spontaneous movements, one leading and one as the mirror image.

*A student crosses a swollen stream on a log.

Another interesting exercise, R. Baird Shuman (1978) suggests, is a mime progression in which students mime driving a car and "perform it like a teen-aged hot-rodder, a middle-aged salesman driving home after a week on the road, a 78-year-old widow driving home from the supermarket in heavy traffic, a drunk driving home from a party, a policeman driving in pursuit of a drunk driving home from a party" (p. 52).

Role-playing is one of the most familiar forms of creative dramatics to both students and teachers. Roles are predetermined in this drama form but

ED 50

the dialogue is created as the drama progresses. Because role-playing is more teacher directed than strict improvisational drama, teachers new to creative drama often feel more comfortable with it.

Improvisational drama differs from role-playing in that it is almost totally student planned. This form of drama, already incorporated into the school curriculum of British schools, demonstrates Dewey's concept of "learning through experience" (Mazor, 1978, p. 328). For example, James Moffett (1967) sees improvisational drama as a way to personalize literature--fairy tales, legends, myths, and history--by allowing students to fill in details, add dialogue, express the thoughts and feelings of characters, fictional and historical:

> There are several, more fundamental, purposes of dramatic improvisation. Begun at an early uninhibited age, extemporizing of this sort can head off later self-consciousness, make verbalization easy and natural, increase presence of mind, and develop inventiveness. . . . More specific goals are to foster the ability to (1) listen closely and react directly to an interlocutor, (2) devise ad hoc rhetorical ploys for getting certain effects and results, (3) simulate the language, style, voice and manner of someone of a certain type of role, (4) shift roles, attitudes, and points of view--stand in other's shoes, (5) feel from the inside the dynamics that make up a theatrical scene, and (6) act out and express real feelings in a situation made safe by the pretense that "I am being someone else." (Moffett, p. 28)

In the classroom, I have found improvisation invaluable not only as a prewriting exercise in composition and in literature, but as an aid in the rest of the curriculum. When students use personal experience to respond to problems, characters, or situations, they are really creating and participating in new experience, as Shuman (p. 57) suggests.

Barnes and Moffett see great advantages in classroom talk, another form of creative improvisation. Barnes, for instance, sees classroom talk as different from other talk in three ways: (1) movement and gesture play a larger part, (2) group improvisation requires conscious collaboration, and (3) the narrative framework allows repetition and provides a unity which gives action symbolic status (p. 8). Moffett suggests that the talk provides a first step toward writing "when a speaker takes over a conversation and sustains some subject alone. . . .He has moved away from drama toward narrative, exposition, and theory--the domains of writing" (p. 22). Such thinking and speaking, natural partners in classroom talk, are essential elements in prewriting.

Through the vicarious experiences drama provides, students are able to escape from themselves and become part of the consciousness of another being, human or nonhuman, real or fantastic. Because students can participate fully in "the other" in the drama, they are encouraged to withdraw from their egocentrism. As Duke suggests, "The problem comes to the surface most often in children's written compositions, for there no accompanying gesture or intonation pattern helps his reader decipher the message" (p. 90). Educational drama, through the vicarious experience engendered through role-playing, allows the student to be aware of differences in the experience and attitude of a reader (audience) and adapt written discourse to fit the needs of the audience (the reader). Guffin (1978) provides an excellent list of activities (included in Appendix) which integrate subject matter and bring students into the extended experience situations which give them a broadened viewpoint of both personae and audience.

The implications for the classroom are clear. Creative drama can provide a non-threatening learning experience which encourages thinking.

APPENDIX A

Dramatic Activities
(Taken from Jan A. Guffin, pp. 120-122)

(1) Discuss with students words which reflect various personalities, such as pompous, dogmatic, complacent, devious, and so on. Then challenge them to create characters like Peter Pompous or Debbie Devious who are based on people drawn from their own experience--someone in their neighborhood, someone among their relatives, or someone among their friends.

(2) After studying a chapter in history, compose with the students a list of basic words which describe the feelings of various classes of people. What words best describe the condition of the feelings of the working class, the aristocrat, the poor? Then improvise situations which depict such words.

(3) Ask students to make a list of words which are most often associated with special days such as Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, or the Fourth of July. Then improvise situations which are not related to those special occasions but which depict the words which the class has used to characterize the holidays.

(4) Determine which words in a given subject are used most frequently--words such as government, democracy, constitution, biology, microscope, composition, stanza, theme, paraphrase. Give the students a list of the roots from which such words are built. Dramatize the roots in class as a way of visualizing the origin of such words and as a way of preparing the student to meet the root in related words.

(5) Ask students to select one individual in their daily lives whom they can monitor for one week to determine certain words which appear frequently in their speech pattern. At the end of the week, ask students to choose two working partners for an improvisational exercise. Then give the following assignment: "The three of you meet coincidentally in the supermarket (or shopping center--any of various places will do). Discuss your plans for a coming vacation by using the words which appeared with greatest frequency on your list."

(6) Give students contrastive sentences such as, "You are the best pet in the whole world and I don't know what I would do without you," and "You are the most ridiculous animal I have ever laid eyes on, and the quicker I can get rid of you, the better." Ask one student to play the owner, the other to play the dog. Ask the owner to deliver the sentences in a conventional way and watch the dog's reactions. Then ask him to deliver the pleasant sentence in a harsh tone, the harsh sentence in a pleasant tone, and watch the dog's reactions again. Discuss the importance of pitch, stress, and juncture in communicating to both animals and people.

(7) In The Belle of Amherst, Emily Dickinson is portrayed as saying, "Now, there's a word you take your hat off to!" Ask students to find a word they would "take their hat off to," then place their word in a hat, draw a word from the hat, discover its meaning, write the word on the board, and pantomime its meaning for the class.

(8) Improvise family situations in which students assume various roles at the dinner table. Ask each person at the table to express a variety of feelings in a nonverbal way. How might the father react to indicate his disapproval of a child's behavior at the table? How might the mother come to the child's defense? How might the child sulk or immediately straighten up and behave according to the father's wishes?

(9) Enumerate with the class the emotions felt by a character in a narrative, such as London's "To Build a Fire" or Bierce's "An Occurrence at Owl

Creek Bridge." Try pantomiming those feelings in the order in which they occurred in the narrative.

(10) Ask students to observe with care another person watching a performance of some kind (a television show, a play, a lecture, a concert) to determine the nonverbal reactions of that individual. Reproduce them in pantomime for the class to see if classmates can guess (a) what kind of performance is being observed, and (b) what the overall feeling is on the part of the observer.

APPENDIX B

Suggested Writing Activities Culminating from Creative Dramatics

(1) Write parodies.
(2) Write monologues.
(3) Write TV or radio scripts.
(4) Rewrite a story from another perspective.
(5) Finish or rewrite an ending to a story or play.
(6) Conduct interviews.
(7) Write letters to a newspaper expressing an opinion; to an actor or actress in a performance.
(8) Write critiques of: TV shows, plays, movies.
(9) Rewrite dialogue in modern idiom.
(10) Write the script for a silent film.
(11) Rewrite the lyrics of a song.
(12) Write the narration for a mime; the dialogue for an improvisation.
(13) Rewrite a story as a play; rewrite a play as a story.
(14) Write original plays from improvisation or out of literature.

Writing in Content Areas

Susan Blumenthal

Whenever I begin a new social studies unit with my fifth-grade students, I feverishly brainstorm for new ideas to interest them. At least one special project or report is part of each unit. Often I am disappointed with the response I receive to my well-thought-out ideas, particularly when I receive pages copied from an encyclopedia where I had hoped to find fresh, juvenile thinking.

My response to this was usually anger: "Why didn't the student write in his own words?" "All the student did was to find anything about the topic and copy it." But I now know better. I, too, am to blame. Since using the writing process as a teaching method was not covered in my college courses, I did not understand how useful and important it could be in the teaching of subject matter.

Writing was something done in language class. Yet every time I assigned a project or report, my students had to write, too. Was it fair for me to assume that my students would know enough about writing from their language instruction? Was there any difference in writing a report and writing a composition? Now I know my students copy information because they don't know how to write on their own in response to my assignments, and my assignments do not always help them achieve good learning and good writing.

Writing in content areas not only enhances learning of subject matter, but it can also enhance students' ability to write in a variety of settings, to a variety of audiences, and for a variety of purposes. Uniting writing and content material can help students learn to use writing in real situations and join what is learned in language classes to all subjects.

Many of our students are victims of penny-in-the-slot learning, where the teacher provides a stimulus, the question, and the student provides a response, the teacher-determined answer (Sharp, 1980, p. 84). It is a kind of rote-memory method of learning subject matter. An example of this is giving the student notes or an outline written by the teacher to be later followed by an examination on the material. On the surface it appears to be an easy way to teach and an easy way to learn. But in reality it is simply writing as a means of testing. Writing in content areas can also be a kind of parrotting back what students think the teacher would like for them to know, as in report writing. Such uses of writing are unsatisfactory because they fail to (1) provide for the development of cognitive skills, (2) help the student learn content material and discover insights about it, (3) guide students to transfer what writing skills they have to content areas, or (4) improve students' ability to write (Beyert and Brostoff, 1979, p. 185).

In brief, to be satisfactory writing in content areas should help develop cognitive skills. Appropriate assignments can involve students in all levels of thinking. As students move from the simple thought processes involved in assignments to the more complex ones, they develop intellectually because they remain mentally challenged.

Recalling and recording skills involved in writing a report are in the lowest level of thinking according to Bloom's Taxonomy--the knowledge level. If students can be appropriately guided in classroom work and by written assignments to employ higher levels of thinking, they will be able to move beyond this level into the five higher levels: comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

As students write, they are really putting together bits of information into new relationships and ending up with new knowledge and new insights. Students, therefore, perceive this knowledge in a personal way. They have

applied and actively interacted with information and have learned as a result. Learning, then, falls into the realm of self-discovery. That's a huge motivational force, as well as good use of cognitive skills. In addition, the student must then be able to write in a way that will convey the knowledge to the teacher or to some perceived audience. Students who write use language as a tool to explore, to see beyond what they know, to discover meaning, and to communicate it (Murray, 1978, p. 87). They will probably retain more information, also.

Content area teachers, therefore, should feel responsible to improve their students' writing ability. They must not only be concerned with what they ask their students, but with how the students are allowed to respond (Morton, D'Arcy, Mewton, Parker, 1976, p. 34). If poorly written work is accepted by the teacher, then the student will feel no need to do better.

Content-area teachers can help students improve their writing ability by developing a sense of audience and purpose. After all, content-area classes provide a vast variety of real and imaginary situations in which to develop skills.

There are various ways content-area teachers can help their students write better and learn more. One way is through James Moffett's writing-across-the-curriculum program (1981), which draws heavily on personal observation and provides for "a progressive abstracting of material (p. 6). It is a program where writing assignments are developmentally sequenced to aid the student in reaching the highest possible level of thinking. His schema of discourse is as follows:

Progression of Speaker-Audience Relationship
- Thinking to oneself
- Speaking to another person face to face
- Writing to known party
- Writing to a mass, anonymous audience

Progression of Speaker-Subject Relationship
- Recording what is happening
- Reporting what happened
- Generalizing what happens
- Inferring what will, may, or could be true (p. 13)

Basically the program depends on developing students' powers of observation. They observe, assimilate, and categorize information to form new generalizations or confirm old ones. New knowledge, therefore, originates from the student's own observations. Since students use their own thinking or inner voice about any subject, ". . . impersonal as well as personal notations made of it may be composed into any kind of discourse for any purpose" (p. 29).

The following are examples of Moffett's sequencing, along with suggestions for content area integration:

1. Stream of consciousness--Writing whatever comes to mind for fifteen minutes.

2. Spontaneous sensory monologue--Noting what is observed (seeing, hearing, and smelling) for fifteen minutes. This can be integrated with a science class as an animal observation.

3. Composed observation--Writing using one set of sensory notes to be written in an interesting, understandable manner for other people. The animal observation can be written as a report.

These examples enable students to connect writing with their inner voice based on an act of witnessing. This enhances their self-awareness.

The next set of activities connect oral speech to writing.

1. Duologue--Inventing a conversation between two people. This can be integrated with a social studies unit as a conversation between historical figures or people with opposing views on an issue.

2. Exterior Monologue--Making up a character telling something to another person. Identity and location of the speaker should be revealed by what is said. This could be an interesting way to write a biography.

The next set goes from concrete narratives to generalizations, shifting from past tense to the present tense of generalization.

1. Correspondence--Inventing a series of letters between two people. A scientific/environmental phenomenon or a current event could be the subject.

2. Diary.

3. Autobiography--Writing about oneself.

4. Eyewitness Memoir--Telling about an incident witnessed as an observer. An historical or scientific event could be used for content area integration.

These are just a sample of the activities in Moffett's program.

His program illustrates how well-planned assignments can embody purpose, audience, and cognitive skill development.

In making assignments the teacher should also:

1. Know what skills the student should learn and allow him to explore using writing.

2. Assign something that is open-ended to allow for creativity.

3. Make sure students understand assignments.

4. Help students develop an awareness of purpose of writing and its communicative nature (Beyert and Brostoff, p. 184).

5. Share student writing for fun and to heighten sense of audience.

I now look forward to trying new techniques and assignments with my students, not only to teach content area but also to improve their writing, and possibly to enhance their cognitive development. I now see my students as active thinkers in slightly different stages of cognitive development. I now see them as writers as well as learners. And I now think they will be too busy discovering knowledge through writing in my classes to even consider copying from the encyclopedia.

Developing Fluency with the Free-to-Focus Approach

Frank R. Thompson

For too long, English composition instructors have emphasized correctness before fluency. Dismissing the importance of slowly developing fluency in writing, teachers devise such introductory writing experiences as, "Your assignment will be a paper on theme in Huckleberry Finn. Please observe proper punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and grammar. Limit your assignment to 1000 words. It will be due next Tuesday." Expecting instant, gradable, academic feedback, they may instead receive nothing from many students, at best, a stiff, cold imitation of a scholarly paper from the A-B crowd. Where, in this process, does the composing begin? It does not.

Yet it should. Developing fluency, the ability to write easily and expressively, should not be taken for granted in the secondary English class, anymore than in the grade school. Basic writers are often not fluent with the written word because they are forced to worry about structure and correctness. Fearful of having their papers stabbed with red corrections from an instructor who measures success in terms of correctness, they lose the ability to continue and give up. As Mina Shaughnessy (1977) notes:

> For the Basic Writing student, academic writing is a trap, not a way of saying something to someone. The spoken language, looping back and forth between speakers, offering chances for groping and backing up and even hiding, leaving room for the language of hands and faces, of pitch and pauses, is generous and inviting. Next to this rich orchestration, writing is but a line that moves haltingly across the page, exposing as it goes all that the writer doesn't know, then passing into the hands of a stranger who reads it with a lawyer's eyes, searching for flaws . . . Some writers, inhibited by their fear of error, produce but a few lines an hour or keep trying to begin, crossing out one try after another until the sentence is hopelessly tangled. (p. 7)

Producing the Huckleberry Finn paper may also be disastrous. Often, the writing is in a phony, imitative style which does not speak honestly and tell truths. There is a false homage to the textbook god, a mold of uniformity that is purely bad writing, or, as Ken Macrorie (1976) prefers to call it, "Engfish":

> Any person trying to write honestly and accurately soon finds he has already learned a hundred ways of writing falsely. As a child he spoke and wrote honestly most of the time, but when he reaches fifteen, honesty and truth become harder. The pressures of his ego are greater. He reaches for impressive language; often it is pretentious and phony. He imitates the style of adults, who are often bad writers themselves. (p. 6)

Macrorie believes that Engfish results when teachers think that students need to be forced. As he notes about his own early failure as a composition teacher, "Because I was telling them, they had no chance to tell me" (1970, p. 19). In fact, there is very little chance for students to become fluent writers in classrooms with too much discipline or too little, situations that often occur. Macrorie (1970) defines three types of classroom situations, only one of which nurtures fluency:

> In the First Way the teacher hands out a package of information and tests to see whether students can remember its content. The package contains no gifts, and the teacher expects none in return.

> In the Second Way, the teacher provides complete freedom and no direction at all. That way is apt to produce a few splendid, inventive sand castles that are eventually abandoned on a beach with empty beer cans.
>
> In the Third Way, which I stumbled onto, students operate with freedom and discipline. They are given real choices and encouraged to learn the way of experts. (p. 27)

In effect, English composition teachers often seem to march to their own drummers. Many are not prepared by their education to teach the writing process; thus they have very little confidence in their abilities. This lack of confidence often produces either haphazard instruction, leading to Second Way results, or overly formal instruction, leading to First Way results (Irmscher, 1979, p. 8).

At this point, I think it wise to include statements which Irmscher feels are self-evident concerning writing and the teaching of writing. In Teaching Expository Writing, Irmscher attempts to separate writing-truth from writing-folklore. The truths are:

1. In order to write, we have to put down one word before we write another word.
2. Most people don't like to write.
3. By its nature, writing is a solitary experience.
4. Writing is not as natural as speaking.
5. We learn writing by doing it. (pp. 8-12)

By accepting these basic statements, we can better appreciate the problems of a reluctant student writer. Clearly, many people don't like to write because writing is a solitary, unnatural experience. It is learned arduously, by doing, by putting down one word at a time, by writing and revising, writing and revising. Fluency is hard to come by.

Freewriting

The best method to get fluency from secondary composition students seems to be through nondirected freewriting. There is no method that better accomplishes getting words down on paper, helping people experience some joy in the process, encouraging sharing personal writing experiences, developing natural sounding discourse, and just plain keeping people doing it. If this all sounds too simple, let me say that it can be the most simple, yet rewarding, experience a secondary composition teacher may structure because it is student-centered. Freewriting gives students the experience to write in their own "voice."

The beginning of the school year, of course, is the most logical time for fluency-developing freewriting exercises. Ken Macrorie (1970) indicates impressive results with freewriting in his freshman college composition class:

> A whole semester passed before I realized I should begin my classes with free writing. After that, they were writing complete stories in the second and third week. . . . The writers revealed a surprising occasional command of metaphor, forceful beginnings and endings, telling detail, word play, irony. All those years I had tried to get a student to put down a sensuous detail that would bring alive his ideas and feelings! Now I simply ask students to write freely, first recording random thoughts, then focusing on one subject, and they frequently produce what the poet Wallace Stevens called "the exquisite environment of fact." (p. 22)

Students usually achieve the easy mechanical goal of simply not stopping

once they put pen to paper. They may not like to write; they may not even like to freewrite, but they can succeed in this rather simple task. As Peter Elbow (1981) so aptly says, "Freewriting is the easiest way to get words on paper and the best all-around practice in writing that I know" (p. 13).

Freewriting eliminates the wasted time and energy of initial wondering and worrying felt by so many high school writers. It is good preliminary exercise that leads to what Elbow refers to as "powerful writing." Elbow (1981) concludes, "Freewriting exercises are push-ups in withholding judgment as you produce so that afterwards you can judge better" (p. 14).

Too often, while they are writing students stop, ponder, and search for better words and better thoughts. They edit as they write. The secondary teacher should discourage this dual editing/writing process, because it produces anxiety and bad writing. Elbow (1973) suggests that students stop "trying to write well. Otherwise you will never write well." He wants his students to start writing, even if that means "writing the wrong meanings in the wrong words" (p. 25). For in the process of writing, writers end up thinking something they hadn't started out thinking:

> The moment you try to hold that thought or feeling up against some other to see the relationship, you simply lose the picture--you get nothing but buzzing lines or waving colors. So admit this. Avoid anything more than one feeling, perception, or thought. Simply write as much as possible. . . . Just write and keep writing. (Elbow, 1973, p. 61)

Of course, this contradicts such conventional wisdom as "first try to figure out what you want to say; don't start writing till you do; make a plan; use an outline; begin writing only afterward" (Elbow, 1973, p. 14). Keeping control is central to such advice, as is the idea that writers must never wander on paper. It sees writing as a two-step process; first the idea then the language. But, as Elbow (1973) suggests, freewriting allows writers to discover their ideas while writing. And it is more productive.

> Instead of a two-step transaction of meaning-into-language, think of writing as an organic, developmental process in which you start writing at the very beginning--before you know your meaning at all--and encourage your words gradually to change and evolve . . . a transaction with words whereby you free yourself from what you presently think, feel, and perceive. (p. 15)

There seems to be growing feeling that freewriting should be used more than just as beginning composition exercise. The goal of freewriting is not merely limpid fluency, helping the blocked writer overcome resistance and move toward control, but the power that can come from control (Elbow, 1981, p. 19). I would encourage additional freewriting periodically throughout the composition course to put vitality, some resistance (which may be essential to keep from writing flat pieces), and surprise back into the writing.

Building to Focus and Audience

Assuredly, freewriting is not the cure-all for producing fluent student writers, but it is a very productive start. Once a student has broken through the Engfish mold, he should find it easier to produce focused pieces. Macrorie encourages gradual building of these more directional forms of writing. Much of his "telling writing" theory is based upon teaching economic word choice, speaking in authentic voice, and developing abilities of writing description which put the readers believably "there." Too many times students reach for a "great thought" in their writing before they fully explore their thoughts (Macrorie, 1976, pp. 34-35). To quote Macrorie:

> Today I begin by asking students to do something they can do brilliantly right off. Then I ask them to do more difficult things. If the next hurdle is too high, I lower it, or let them try several times. This is not a test, with grades, not a chance for me to fail them and work out my aggressions or feel superior. (1970, p. 92)

In addition to building focus exercises, audience is important to hurdling the fluency block. Facing the problem of "What do I write about?" or "What am I going to say?" the student may find it easier to produce for an audience other than just the teacher. Audience could be student groups within the classroom, magazines or papers, or even contests. Marvin Zimmerman believes that a student will begin to enjoy his writing with this exposure and thus do increasing amounts of it (1979, pp. 51-52). Teachers should also encourage sharing through exercises which encourage reading aloud or displaying as well as publishing. Sometimes these exercises will eliminate the need for grading every paper. The product-evaluation will take care of itself. Many believe, like Robert Parker, that proper focus on the process will lead to proper focus on the product (1972, pp. 1328-1333).

Feedback through sharing writing with peers is something sorely lacking in many "old school" composition classes. Sharing is an easy way to learn about writing because a student is "learning by ear." It develops a sense of feasibility and allows perfect practice for giving and getting the essential feedback for improving the process. Elbow concludes in Writing With Power that freewriting and sharing improves writing more than any other activities (1981, p. 24). Lack of this sharing-feedback causes fluency problems because the student has no idea how people are reacting to his words.

With enough feedback, the student develops another attitude which may increase word flow--not worrying how the audience experiences his words (speaking out). Elbow (1973) believes sometimes this desire to speak out and fulfill goals encourages a student to complete his paper (pp. 124-126). Even a certain amount of anxiety towards reading a paper to his peers causes a student to produce stronger papers with each attempt. Judging the strengths and weaknesses of class papers, group response gives many times the evaluation of a standard teacher-graded class (Macrorie, 1970, pp. 94-95).

Other Influencing Factors

Many other factors encourage fluency in the writing process, far too many to mention all of them. So I will touch upon a few factors which seem most important.

Quality versus quantity in writing is a curriculum problem for the secondary English teacher. Often faced with literature, grammar, and composition curriculum in one course, he finds time is a precious commodity. How much time is available for revision? How much time for continuing development of a writing topic? R. D. Walshe (1979) believes the first basic for good writing is a steady quantity of writing day by day. He believes in programming a wide variety of forms and functions in student writing. This he calls teaching writing by "more caught than taught," a more operational approach, not just a time-consuming accompaniment of the topic (pp. 51-52). The importance of teacher attitude that encourages writing is bedrock here.

Elbow (1981) believes that teachers must commit themselves to longer time periods of growth and development in the writing process. Measurement by month or semester doesn't seem to allow for the improvement we seek from students. Experimental writing should be given more time in order for better expository writing to result. Elbow calls this development "seeking real voice." Students are likely to lose control of syntax and structure early in the search for this voice. Poor product may be produced by measuring progress in short time periods (pp. 102-104). Donald Murray (1978) seems to support this idea when he states that the single most motivating factor in writing is

the exploration of a subject through many drafts (p. 100). Helping the unmotivated student find the right relationship with himself in composition takes time.

Irmscher (1979) sees teacher attitude and personality as a major factor also. He states that "the single most important factor that affects improvement in the composition class is the teacher-student relationship" (p. 49). Good teachers know the difference between expectation and intimidation. Too much indifference can encourage continued dull writing or no writing at all. Irmscher continues, "The difference between the self-taught, talented writers and struggling writers is the degree to which their intuitive resources are developed" (p. 23). Thus, reading is considered by Irmscher to be ultimately the best writing instruction. The teacher must help with reading resources which are needed by the student to generate and shape ideas. Textbooks which primarily stress the product should focus more on process to generate these ideas.

Perhaps one of the most interesting arguments is presented by Ruth Anne Brunner (1975), who believes the creative writing teacher must be a performer to encourage comfortable and free student expression. The versatility which must be possessed by any composition instructor leads her to conclude that no method for teaching creative writing is guaranteed (pp. 48-49). The effect of media upon student society today is very strong. Teacher/Performer 101 may need to be a new addition to college methods curriculum. After all, our students are used to watching television performers.

Ken Macrorie gives lists of suggestions for getting telling writing and writing to be read.

Telling Writing Suggestions for Teachers

1. Read aloud an example of Engfish, the stilted word-wasting language of the schools. Point out its weaknesses. Read aloud a truth-telling paper that speaks with authentic voice.
2. Tell students: "No one speaks truth always. We all lie, consciously and unconsciously. I ask you to try for truths. I am going to try."
3. Begin with free writing, reproduce the best passages and bring into class. Read them aloud. Prohibit negative comments for the first few meetings. If a listener does not like a passage, he is to say nothing. This is not lying, simply refraining from comment.
4. Face the effects of grades upon truthtelling. One expedient is to ask students to store their returned writing in a folder or envelope, and at the end of the course present it for a grade. [Southern Ohio Twist--have students turn in papers they (possibly their group) think are their best efforts during a certain time span for a grade. Check other papers as assignments (✓, +, etc.]
5. Ditto or otherwise reproduce the best writings and pass them out to all members of the class before having them read aloud. Students may write on their own ditto masters.
6. Pass out a reproduced writing to the group and read it aloud, or ask a student to read it aloud, or suggest that the writer (unidentified) read the paper if he/she wishes. Give time for review after the reading, then seek helpful rather than damaging responses. Ex. "Did anyone like anything in the paper?"
7. Ask students to comment on a piece of writing before you do. Otherwise, it's a step back into traditional school.
8. At first reproduce good writing so that students can advance from success to success. As the course proceeds, some students do not score. Ask them to do free writing again. After they have received praise from the group, writers are usually strong enough to listen to others tell them that a subsequent work is

weak in large ways.

9. Persons who find regular assignments wrong for them at the moment may come to the instructor and say they are writing on another topic of their choosing.
10. Bring in your own writing occasionally to be judged (without forewarning).
11. Don't ask for True Confessions.
12. Promise publication of best writing.
(Macrorie, 1976a, pp. 261-265)

"To Be Read" Suggestions for Teachers

13. Ask students to write a forty-five minute free paper focusing on one subject.
14. Ask students to write an informal case history of a day or hour on the job, or in a process or activity they've gone through many times. If they wish, they can write freely several times about the experience and then try to find a center (some tension, meaning, or lack of meaning) in the activity that helps tell them which details to discard and which they need more of.
15. Ask students to record short fabulous realities in a notebook or journal. Example: "Boy and girl talking, he standing in gutter, she on curb, for better eye-to-eye contact."
16. Ask students to think of expanding one fabulous reality into a little story.
17. Ask students to write a longer paper remembering some childhood incident that shook them up.
18. Ask students to keep a journal for three weeks or more, making entries only when they see or think of something striking.
19. Ask students to try word play in journals. Puns, rhymes. Revive dead metaphors.
20. Ask students to write a paper about something they have read. They should tell how and why some part of the work delighted, enraged, or stamped itself onto their memories. At the beginning and end of the paper they may present experience from their lives that illuminates the work.
21. Ask students to write an indirect paper, in which they say the opposite of what they mean, create a fantasy that parallels some life situation, or speak in a pompous or otherwise false voice in order to satirize.
(Macrorie, 1976b, pp. 52-59)
22. Have fun in the classroom!

Conclusion

My search for the "magic fluency formula" is in no way complete. The new focus on this subject will certainly shed more light on the subject in upcoming years. I do believe that the product-focused Engfish classroom teacher must be made more aware of process. Only then will the composition student be able to find freedom of self-expression and freedom through experimentation of both thought and form.

Freewriting as a starting point for fluency development is essential. Many students will find a revolutionary feeling in freewriting--the ability to easily produce pages of the written word. Without the forced topic, students may find personal enjoyment, fun (if I might mention a classroom taboo), in the English class. Freewriting, the first step, seems logical before any focus.

Certainly, a classroom environment of sharing and feedback is extremely important to the struggling composition student. Friendship and caring seem to be keys to unlocking much of writing reluctance. Strong writers may teach others working in these groups through structured sharing experiences. Audience is essential!

Of course, arguments like James B. Vopat's "Uptaught Rethought" (1979) present interesting questions concerning the writing of student-centered thought. Vopat sees the student-centered classroom as too intense in personal truth. He believes Macrorie's format praises stylistically chaotic writing which seems to place students on the line. Begging for a return to the old "Comp," Vopat dismisses much of Uptaught production as immature and uncomfortably childlike (pp. 41-45). However, I do not believe the Macrorie instruction limits itself to "I experience," or "I feel," production. Development of fluency, encouraged early by the "I feel" paper, can lead to future focus on writing power, no matter what form.

I will leave you with one other rather disturbing quote from Peter Elbow (1981). Much of the writing anxiety felt by students may subconsciously come from a teacher's self-image:

> Enormous numbers of teachers are scared about writing. After all, we have been trained to be extremely good critics and editors and that puts a burden on our writing process. (I think that one of the main impediments to student progress in writing is this usually unstated deep anxiety about writing on the part of many teachers.) (pp. 96-97)

I end then with a call for writing, writing by both student and teacher that helps put pleasure into the lives of both. May the pleasure produce people who, indeed, write fluently. If we, as composition instructors, practice and patiently allow time for student practice, we may all develop into better writers together.

Writing for Publication

Virginia F. Araujo

Picture the following events. An English teacher makes an assignment for a regular (nonaccelerated, nonremedial) eleventh-grade class: write and market (attempt to have published) an original short story, poem, or article on any subject. Students receive the assignment without undue comment or complaint.

As the grading period unfolds, writers give "field reports" on their progress. The school newspaper publishes two articles, three poems, and one short story from composition class members. A local newspaper snaps up a humorous short piece on the generation gap as perceived by a sixteen-year-old. Another student writes a flyer promoting a carnival sponsored by his church youth group. A girl has her true-life experience published in Seventeen magazine. The class "motor head" sells an article to Popular Mechanics on new ideas for boring out engine cylinders to increase power. One student even seems about to sell a juvenile science fiction story to a book publisher. Unusual events?

Maybe not, if students in grades kindergarten through twelve were taught to see their writing as a profitable activity leading to a worthwhile product needed by real people in the real world. In fact, students make little connection between what they write in the classroom and what they read on the outside. That they themselves could be writing some of those things read outside school probably never occurs to them. For most of student writing is aimed at teachers. Britton (1975) notes that 92 percent of the time pupils write to please the teacher and pass the course.

But is this orientation toward teacher-centered writing a serious error? If writing in school is aimed ultimately toward publication, will students deem composition more a pleasure and less a chore? Will they write more? Will they write better? Will larger numbers of them adopt some form of writing as their life's work, as a profitable sideline, or as a satisfying hobby?

How can teachers help their students learn to write for real people in the real world? Perhaps the best way is to teach students how freelance writers work. They can teach the basics of manuscript preparation and mailing. They can teach how knowing market conditions will boost the odds for manuscript sales.

The rest of this paper discusses basic, professional manuscript preparation and mailing and explores up-to-date market conditions for potential student freelance writers. Some information comes from my personal freelancing experience and also from the pamphlet "Getting Started in Writing," available from the Writer's Digest (9933 Alliance Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45242). The rest of the information comes from an interview with Kirk Polking, former editor of the Writer's Digest.

Basic Information for Preparing and Mailing a Manuscript

Use white, 8½ x 11 paper. Make a carbon copy. Use a pica or elite typewriter with a black ribbon. Don't use a cover sheet. Don't send a cover letter for fiction or poetry.

On the first page in the upper left corner single space the writer's name, street, city, zip code. In the upper right corner of the first page single space the approximate wordage and the publication rights the writer is offering for sale. Don't number the first page. Halfway down the page center the title using upper and lower case. Double space the word "by" centered.

Double space and center the writer's name or pseudonym.

On the second and each succeeding page goes the writer's last name in the upper left corner. In the upper center goes the page number, usually typed with a dash on each side. At the upper right goes the story or article title, or, if it's too long, then a keyword in the title.

Margins should be 1¼ inches on all sides of each full page. Paragraph indentation is five spaces.

Always include a SASE (self-addressed stamped envelope) with the manuscript. Shorter pieces and poems (one per page) may be mailed in business size envelopes. Longer pieces, especially if accompanied by photos, go in 9 x 12 or 10 x 13 size manilla envelopes. Mail First Class for better speed and handling.

Interview with Kirk Polking

On June 30, 1981, former Writer's Digest editor Kirk Polking presented much up-to-date and helpful information on freelancing for students in the following taped interview.

INTERVIEWER: Are there opportunities for students in, say, grades 9 through 12 to get into freelance writing, or is the field strictly for adults?

POLKING: I think the opportunities are there, depending on the students themselves and how willing they are to study what magazine editors want to buy and try to produce for it. I can remember, for example, getting a letter from a 13-year-old boy in California after I had given a talk at UCLA. He said that his mother had heard the talk, had gone home and talked about writing, and he decided he would try to write something, too, and he sent along information about some poetry he had just sold to a magazine as a result of that conversation. So, yes, it can be done.

INT: What types of things should a student be aware of if she or he really wants to get into freelancing?

POLKING: The student can't just sit down and decide to write something and then search around and try to find some place to sell it. You have to do it the other way around. You have to try to decide what editors want to buy and then try to write something that fits their needs. As a teacher who's also a writer, you're aware of the Writer's Market, for example, and that would be step one: to look in the Writer's Market, and to look in certain kinds of magazines, particularly those magazines that the student himself likes to read.

INT: Is it a good idea to take a particular magazine that a student's interested in and study quite a few back issues?

POLKING: Absolutely! You shouldn't ever try to write for a magazine that you haven't really studied that carefully.

INT: What types of things do you look for when you study a magazine that you hope to sell to later on?

POLKING: You, of course, analyze the articles themselves or the stories or the poems to see what the subject matter is, how sophisticated they are or whether the editor prefers a more simple style. You look at the advertising because that tells you what kinds of readers the magazine has and tells you something about their interests.

INT: What are some of the advantages of starting while still quite young?

POLKING: Well, I think one of the main advantages is that you don't lose any of your life experiences. Some writers don't start thinking about writing until they're 50 or 60 years old, and by then they've lost thousands of ideas that they could have published in magazines just because they didn't either think or do anything about them at the time.

INT: What do you see as some of the biggest pitfalls that a young person starting out should watch out for?

POLKING: I think one of the biggest is giving up too soon. I mean we're all very sensitive as young people. We think if somebody rejects our story, the story must be no good, and we must be no good, and that's silly because stories and articles are rejected for many reasons that have nothing to do with the value of the story. The editor might have just bought something like it or assigned it to somebody else or didn't particularly like that story that day. You know some other editor may like it very much.

INT: Is there some magic number of times that you should send a story out and keep hoping, like after you've sent it out five times you say, "Well, that's it. I give up." Or ten times? Or fifteen?

POLKING: I think it depends on how much faith you have in the idea. I, for example, have just signed a book contract for a nonfiction book for young people that had been rejected by fourteen publishers. But I had enough faith in the idea that I knew I just hadn't hit the right person yet so I kept going, and I've now got a contract to do this book.

INT: Are there perhaps a few techniques that beginning writers can use so they can fend off becoming discouraged and quitting? Any definite, concrete things they can do?

POLKING: I think the best thing to do is not have all your eggs in one basket. Have lots of ideas circulating. I was a full-time freelance writer for about five years, and at one point I kept a list just to see how many ideas I had circulating and how many I sold. I think in a certain period of time out of about 119 ideas I sold 16. So you see I was only averaging about 10%, a little bit better than that, and if I'd given up every time I got a rejection, I never would have sold anything. There's also an insurance man's rule of thumb which says if you have twenty cold prospects, you might get two lukewarm prospects, and you might make one sale, so why should a writer expect to do better than that?

INT: Where did you get all those ideas you had circulating all the time?

POLKING: Any writer should be a big reader. If you read the newspapers, if you read magazines, if you listen to what people say to you or overhear what they're saying, ideas are all around you. As you learn to become a freelance writer, you learn how to make those ideas benefit you. Ideas are everywhere. You just have to read and listen.

INT: Teachers of writing or composition in grades 7 through 12 wonder what method is best to get their students to write. Would you have any suggestions for teachers?

POLKING: I've not been a teacher of students at that grade level, so I don't know what works best for them. I've read some publications which imply that not giving some students specific assignments of subject matter but letting them choose sometimes works better. Of course, there are some students who don't want to write regardless of whether you give them the opportunity or not. But it seems to me you can get them writing about what they're interested in instead of assigning artificial subjects which maybe you're interested in but they're not. Surely they all have some special interest, even if it's only some rock star that they're hung up on at the

moment, or some movie they went to see, some baseball player they think is terrific. There must be some things they're so much personally involved in that they have a better incentive to write than if they get assigned some arbitrary subject that they don't care about.

INT: Are there things teachers in the lower grades, kindergarten through grade 6, might do to encourage writing?

POLKING: The only thing I can think of would be a variation on what our teachers do, and that is that they display everything, and kids must get some sense of accomplishment of having their work put up as having some value. I should think that a teacher who would either take the time to read a student's work in public or literally hang it up so visitors to the classroom could see it . . . would lend a value to it. Anything that lends value to the work is worth trying.

INT: As the director of the writing school here at Writer's Digest, do you get students, young people in high school, who enroll to take your various writing courses?

POLKING: We have a few. They're not usually high school students. They're more likely to be college students because there is an expense involved. And, of course, high school kids don't have that much spare money to spend. But, yes, we do have college students. We have lots of older people, too, so it runs the whole age level.

INT: As head of the Writer's Digest School, do you get many questions from students about writing?

POLKING: We do get a few. Some of the questions that I remember getting concern whether students . . . should tell the editor whether they've sold anything before, and my advice is always don't say anything. Just let your work stand for itself.

INT: Over the last few years have the total number of opportunities for beginning freelancers increased or decreased?

POLKING: I think the quantities of magazines continually increase. We don't have lots of big mass circulation magazines anymore, but we have so many specialized publications that there's hardly any subject you can be interested in and not find some magazine that might be interested in what you'd want to write about. Yes, I do think the opportunities have increased.

INT: What about the demand for fiction versus nonfiction over the last five or ten years? Has there been a drop in demand for fiction and an increase for nonfiction or what's the picture there?

POLKING: The books, for example, that have been published in the last few years are almost overwhelmingly nonfiction. Last year there were about 40,000 books published in the United States, and only about 3,000 of those were novels, so that you can see it's overwhelmingly a nonfiction book market.

INT: Isn't that rather encouraging for a new writer, then, especially a new writer who says, "Oh, I have no imagination"?

POLKING: True. There are still certain fiction skills which are required to sell nonfiction these days. It can't be dryly written. It has to have some dialogue in it. It has to have certain suspense and so on, even if it's going to be nonfiction.

INT: What about some of the recent trends in nonfiction?

POLKING: I can't really say that there are any trends in nonfiction, because if you would look at the best-seller list for the last ten years,

you'll find a little bit of everything. You'll find Christian inspiration, you'll find sex, you'll find cookbooks, diet books, drink books. It's whatever captures the public's fancy. I mean, jogging books were a great thing there for awhile, but they're sort of in a decline. Some new thing will come along, and it'll be hot stuff for a year or so, but the subject matter, to my mind, is unlimited. If you've got a good idea and know how to write well, there's probably an editor out there somewhere who'll publish it.

INT: Do you perhaps know of any high school students who do get their writing published and paid for?

POLKING: I don't know currently of any high school students, but I know of a just-recently-retired editorial associate of ours who taught at Princeton High School in Cincinnati for probably fifteen or twenty years. Every year he would have fifteen or twenty of his students publish work because he had a very active creative writing class. He was an accomplished and steadily publishing poet himself and encouraged his students to write. The last time I heard, he had something like 300 publications. His students had produced more than 300 published poems as a result of his encouragement as a teacher.

INT: He emphasized poetry then?

POLKING: Yes, but he did also teach fiction writing. His own specialty was poetry. Many young people have poetry as a first interest in writing, too. He was very successful.

INT: In what markets do you feel students might have the most success selling their creative efforts right now?

POLKING: Well, again, I think it depends on where their own talents lie. You mentioned poetry for young people. There are a certain number of young people's magazines which do buy poetry. There are a lot of poetry magazines which, while you won't get paid, you will get a byline, or you will get some copies of the magazine. Beyond that, it just depends on the personal interests of the student. If I, for example, were a guy who had a specialty in hopping up cars and some ability in that area and knew how to tell other kids how to do it, I'd try to sell an article to a car magazine. If I were a girl who had some special talent in sewing or cosmetics or some advice on baby sitting do's and don't's, there are magazines which will buy those kinds of things. So it just depends on what the student's own personal interests are.

INT: And the editor doesn't care that the writer is a student?

POLKING: No.

INT: How important is professionalism for beginners? In other words, correct manuscript form, mailing procedures, etc.

POLKING: I think it's absolutely essential, because, if it isn't done properly, it's a dead giveaway that you're a beginner. If the editor sees it, and the first paragraph doesn't captivate, she's afraid she's going to get a slapdash delivery of whatever the article is supposed to be about.

INT: When do writers need a covering letter?

POLKING: Never, in the case of fiction or poetry or humor, even, because nothing you can say about it is going to influence the editor. The manuscript is going to have to stand for itself. In the case of articles, it's not necessary either unless you have some particular point to make about why you have an authoritative point of view and why you should be listened to as to whatever it is you're talking about. Going back to the student, let's say, who might have been doing baby sitting. If she'd been a baby sitter for five years and learned a lot of tricks of how to deal with kids, parents,

etc., then that experience would be important to tell to the editor because it verifies that she knows what she's talking about. But unless you have some special credentials or you've interviewed somebody and you want to point up what this interview subject's credentials are, it really isn't necessary. The thing really has to stand on its own feet.

INT: What types of activities might would-be young writers become involved in to help them succeed in freelancing?

POLKING: . . . [A] writing club. Now, I don't know if many schools have such a thing, but I think writers do need encouragement among themselves because it is a pretty lonely job. If there would be a chance to start a writer's club at a high school, or if you're not in high school, you're a teacher, let's say, and you want to get some fellow colleagues together, make up a club among yourselves and share the rejections you've had and share the joys and perhaps read some of your work to each other and get some criticism, keeping in mind that you're still the final author and you have to decide what to do. But sometimes sharing advice can save you a lot of grief and wasted effort later on, so joining some kind of a writing class or a writing club would be very helpful.

INT: What books might be especially helpful for a beginning writer to read?

POLKING: Well, at the risk of blowing my own horn, I'll mention The Beginning Writer's Answer Book because it's a book which answers about 500 basic questions that writers have on a lot of different subjects. Let me mention a general book and that is The Elements of Style which is a very small paperback book. I think it sells for $2.25 or something like that, but it has absolutely marvelous basic rules of grammar and composition, and it's easy to read. The other essential book, of course, would be The Writer's Market, because it tells you who wants to buy what you're writing. The book does come out each year and is 50% to 75% changed. So if you're serious about writing, you should go to the library and look at the latest edition and not try to use a four- or five-year-old book because editors do move around, and their tastes change. If you want to know what the current editors are buying, you should look at the current edition.

INT: And what about market lists in Writer's Digest? Every month you have real up-to-date information, don't you?

POLKING: Absolutely. The Digest carries all of the new information that we have that comes in after we publish the annual editions of the Market books, and it also gives updated information if address changes have happened and so on. The monthly magazine Writer's Digest would be another essential thing to follow.

INT: We've talked about the importance of being professional, and, of course, professionalism does include grammar, spelling, punctuation. What else is included in your definition of professionalism?

POLKING: Well, in addition to those things that you've already mentioned, I think it is a professional attitude in how you approach your work. First, if you're going to do a piece, you're going to do it the best way you can by not skipping any good research and by not skimping on how you're writing the piece, so that the reader gets the full answers to his questions. I think it also means a professional attitude about deadlines. . . . If you say you'll have [an article] on the editor's desk in three weeks, then you should have it there. Or, if an editor writes you and says, "Could you do this piece for me in two weeks' time?" you either say "Yes, I can," and deliver it or you say "No, but I could do it in three weeks. Would that be all right?" So it's a professional attitude about the depth of your research, the clarity of your writing, and your dealings with your editors.

INT: What would you say to a high school student about writing query letters?

POLKING: High school students might do just as well to write the article because they need that kind of writing practice, anyway. But if they do decide that they would like to try the query letter technique, then all I can tell them is that they still have to do enough research to learn what it is about the article they are trying to sell that's going to be unique and interesting enough to the editor to want to buy it. Essentially a good query letter is just a good sales letter. It tells the editor what this great idea of yours is, why it's so important that his readers will want to have it, what credentials you are bringing to the completion of the article itself. So it's really just writing a good sales letter. It has those qualities in it that I just mentioned. It analyzes the magazine it's being aimed toward and tries to convince the editor that the article is going to be written in a lively style and will have all the facts straight and might even have a little humor in it as well.

INT: Would there be anything else that you think young people need to know if they want to write for publication? Any final words of advice or caution or encouragement?

POLKING: No. I think if they'll just review what we've already said and try to practice what we've preached, they may come up with a check, and we'll be glad to hear about that, too.

The Reluctant Writer: A Search for a Cure

Barbara L. Duff

George Riemer (1969) states that "It is through writing that [a child] submits himself as a candidate to any society beyond the limits of his voice and touch, beyond his family and outside his neighborhood" (p. 18). I am a fifth grade Language Arts teacher who, like George Riemer, has become convinced of the necessity of the skill of written communication to modern society. Because of this belief, I am very concerned for students who habitually receive low grades for badly done assignments in writing or zeros for written assignments that are not handed in for grading. Grades or lack of grades, threats, and my most earnest pleas do not result in improved participation in the writing assignments for many students. Therefore, I set out to discover why so many students refuse to write, who the reluctant writers are, and what can be done to coax the reluctant writers to involve themselves in becoming improving, growing writers. First, I defined the reluctant writer as one who, when requested to write, refuses to (for any number of reasons). Then, I identified three types of reluctant writers. Next, I listed factors possibly causing their reluctance, and, finally, I noted effective teaching methods to use with each type.

Three Types of Reluctant Writers

Willy Won't Write is the student who does not participate in either the physical or mental act of writing. He is usually defeated by school and has adopted the role of rebel to hide his frustration. Willy spends most of his time disrupting class or in the principal's office for punishment. He is failing several subjects and displays a "don't care" attitude toward school.

Corry Can't Write is the student who mentally composes but does not physically combine various marks on paper to convey meaning. Corry is the student who the teacher is always planning to refer to the school psychologist for testing. While he is average or above in some academic areas, he is well below grade level in others. His handwriting and spelling are not decipherable. He knows, because every teacher he has ever had made sure he knows, that no one can read anything he has ever written. Corry has stories inside his head, and he will gladly tell then to you, but he feels that to write them down would be wasted effort.

Donna Don't Write is that student who participates in the physical act of writing but does not become mentally involved in conveying meaning. Donna is a "good" student; she does almost everything well. Teachers love to have Donna in class, because she tries so hard to please the establishment. The writing Donna turns in is always on time, neatly done, and evidently labored over long and hard for correctness, but she hates writing assignments. She has read good writing, she recognizes good writing, and she knows that her writing is not good--just correct. She knows from past experience that teachers do not necessarily expect good writing, as long as it is correct. Donna, in a school setting, may have never experienced the satisfaction of producing a truly meaningful paper, even though the grades she receives for her writing have always been average or above.

Causes of Writing Reluctance

In Teaching Through Encouragement, Robert J. Martin (1969) says that students like Willy Won't Write "are discouraged human beings" (p. 1). Feeling that they have little or no power to influence their environment, they react defensively. The Willy Won't Writes of the world would never agree that it is better to try and fail than not to try at all. They have experienced failure, been discouraged by failure, and know that it's better

just not to try; then they don't have to feel bad when they fail again.

Willy most likely has never seen that writing is valuable in his life. In his mind, a need for the skill of writing has no connection to his goals and ambitions.

Any past attempts at writing have proven to Willy that teachers want writing that restates what that teacher has said. Willy understands that his thoughts and experiences are of little importance because they are different from the teacher's. He also knows that the correctness of written work depends mostly on English conventions, not on the ideas expressed. To save face, to avoid the ominous red grading pen, Willy won't write.

Corry Can't Write needs understanding, and perhaps more specialized instruction than can be provided in the regular classroom. His teacher should, regardless of the paper work and aggravation it causes, begin the referral process for evaluation by a school psychologist. If Corry is found to have a learning disability in written language, a learning disabilities specialist can help him.

Should the testing process determine that Corry Can't Write does not have a specific learning disability, but only a developmental lag relating to some area of the writing process, the psychologist should be able to aid the teacher in selecting learning activities for Corry that will take into account his weakness(es) and his learning style.

It is most important for teachers to remember that their "frustration with [a learning disabled] child's poor written work is not nearly as intense as the personal frustration of the child," according to Edward Meyen. Meyen also says that "failure to respond in certain learning areas may be more a matter of can't than won't" (1978, p. 297).

Donna Don't Write is afraid of failure, even in areas where she is doing well. She avoids asking questions that might make her look stupid and is more concerned with making good grades than with experimenting with ideas. Donna has a low tolerance for ambiguity; therefore, she wants to know the "right" answer even when faced with questions that do not have one right answer. Having been rewarded so long for "correctness," she essentially must relearn to write, must be convinced that "the teacher does not want a correct answer to an unambiguous question, but rather to hear what [she] has to say" (Kohl, 1975, p. 157).

Teaching Methods for Use with Reluctant Writers

To help Willy Won't Write become motivated to write, the teacher should reward any attempt he makes to write with sincere interest in his work, no matter what his topic choice. Open assignments in his areas of interest could aid in motivating Willy to write. The process of writing, not the product, should be the initial goal for Willy. Because he is inexperienced in the tools of writing (spelling, usage, mechanics), the teacher must overlook Willy's problems in these areas until he becomes more confident in his writing ability. Willy, and reluctant writers like him, needs nonthreatening practice in writing. A diary or daily journal, with a required quantity of writing, may have value for him. As the name diary suggests, this writing should be used as a container for personal thoughts, to be read by others only with permission.

In order to help Corry Can't Write unloose the stories inside his head, the teacher must accept that for some reason, known or unknown, Corry really cannot write. A conference with a learning disabilities teacher and a diagnostic writing sample should provide information on what types of activities to use with him. The special teacher may even be able to supply the classroom teacher with some teaching/learning materials to help

remediate Corry's problem.

To stop dull, joyless writing such as Donna Don't Write's, Joyce Armstrong Carroll (1981) suggests that teachers:

1. Write often with students. Share your writing and your writing process.
2. Encourage writing which logically and organically emerges from experiences occurring daily in the classroom.
3. Make your room comfortable and colorful.
4. Receive students' writing tolerantly, positively, but honestly.
5. Discuss with students the appropriate form for their meaning.
6. Balance self-initiated with teacher-initiated writing.
7. Help students develop a sense of varying audiences.
8. Avoid mindless exercises.
9. Work independently with students on individual problems of mechanics, spelling, usage. Work with the class on class-wide problems.
10. "Publish" student writing whenever and however you can. (p. 307)

When searching for methods to use for teaching reluctant writers, I was surprised to discover that most method and activity books fail to acknowledge the reluctant writer. The books too often assume that the ideas they offer will motivate all students to write. No matter how potentially exciting an activity, we must provide the reluctant student with freedom to incorporate his or her ideas and experiences into a writing assignment. Only then will the students achieve the confidence they need to attempt writing.

Because of a lack of experience in the writing process, reluctant writers may be more comfortable with assignments involving physical props. One exercise I've found successful is to distribute a concrete prop, such as a hat, to each class member to wear for a time. (Hats provide an added element to the activity as they are usually forbidden in the classroom.) I then give a writing assignment about the hat, the fictional owner of the hat, or any other aspect of that hat. For example, students who are uncomfortable with imaginative writing may choose to describe the hat they wear. Others can create characters to go with their hats, while some may decide to write from the hat's point of view. An activity such as this one allows many acceptable products and provides a concrete focus for students. Silly or unusual props often inspire the reluctant writer to experiment with new forms of written expression.

Because my reluctant writers are often intimidated by the teacher/evaluator as an audience, I like to use writing-editing groups such as those described in Hooked on Books, by Daniel Fader, and Writing Without Teachers, by Peter Elbow. I offer suggestions and aid to groups when they ask, but also allow students to discuss and learn from each other how to improve a paper. By reading a paper aloud to the group, the student will notice many of the careless mistakes before the teacher sees them.

An added benefit of group editing is that it allows students to hear each other's work. Students who are reluctant writers, upon hearing the written work of peers, may conclude that those students they had always considered to be better than they are really not that outstanding, and thus they gain confidence. Essentially, then, a writing teacher must lead the reluctant writers to that sense of worth voiced so well by Ugo Betti (1976): "Perhaps only you can listen to me and not laugh. Everyone has inside himself . . . what shall I call it--a piece of good news. Everyone is a very great and important character. Yes, that's what we have to tell them" (p. 111).

Teaching the reluctant writer is a tough assignment. When I experience a high frustration level from trying to motivate Willy Won't Write, Corry

Can't Write, and Donna Don't Write and feel ready to give up on these students, I read the words of George Riemer on the importance of writing. Riemer (1969) warns us that "A nation will be remembered in time not by its listeners, but by its speakers. A nation makes its own original mark in history not through its readers, but through its writers" (p. 18).

Handling the Paper Load

Joan Lidrbauch

"Can good composition teaching be done under present conditions?" asks Edwin Hopkins in the very first English Journal. He answers negatively: ". . . if good teaching can be done under present conditions, it is passing strange that so few teachers have found out how to do it . . . Every year teachers resign, break down, perhaps become permanently invalided, having sacrificed ambition, health, and in not a few instances even life, in the struggle to do all the work expected of them" (p. 1). If this was a fair assessment in 1912, it is more than a fair assessment today when the term "teacher burnout" has become a cliché. Student apathy and the competition of television and movies are now added to previous burdens of administrative and parental expectations and the unbelievable paper load.

The paper load is the worst of it. If you regularly assign writing to your students, you are inundated with stacks of papers requiring great amounts of work and time. If you don't regularly assign papers, you are inundated with mounds of guilt. You lose either way.

The truth is paper grading can be time-consuming. William Dusel found that freshman composition instructors took an average of 8.6 minutes to grade a 250-word theme (Fearing, 1980). Multiply that by 150 students and you will spend twenty hours a week just grading papers, and that doesn't include the 6.5 minutes it takes per paper to check revisions. If students write what Fearing considers an ideal, 680 words per week, you have at least 40 hours of work; that is, if you grade every paper.

But does every paper need to be graded? If we think so, we become so paper logged, so work weary we can't respond genuinely when a student brings us a nonassigned individual effort. The delight he or she wants to see from us (and which we want to give) is shadowed by stacks awaiting our attention. The average student can become disheartened by overgrading:

> Why should I spend so much time writing this paper?
> . . . When I turn it in, you're going to mark it up
> and make me rewrite it anyway. (Fitzgibbons, 1980, p. 27)

How do we answer? That is what happens, and in the process we have created unnecessary student-teacher antagonism. Nor do the students' skills improve.

Can we get the students to write, get them to like it, remove the threat of grading, improve their skills, and save ourselves hours of work? Many of us believe that we can--by writing. Peter Elbow calls it "free writing," John Bennett "shotgun writing," Bill Bernhardt just writing, Ken Macrorie "writing freely," Donald Stewart "self-discovery," and Donald Murray "uncalculated discovery." Whatever they call it, most agree that the first step to good writing is fluency. Since fluency is stifled if we are obsessed with making mistakes, free writing should not be evaluated (Elbow, 1973, pp. 4-5). Correctness will follow fluency. Students can learn to edit after they learn to explore.

How does the teacher encourage fluency? One way is through journals. For instance, have students free write for ten minutes nonstop on a topic of their choosing or a suggested topic. You should have students write daily or at least regularly. The journal may be used in diary fashion, not as a record of events but as a tool for self-discovery--a collection of reactions, feelings, and observations. Responses to various assigned readings might also be included.

Through the journal, you can introduce gimmicks or games to the class. Try writing roulette (Shuman, 1979, pp. 3-4). Set the timer at two minutes.

Everyone writes. At the bell, stop, redistribute the papers. All students read the papers they have. Write again. Next, extend the time by 30 seconds. Repeat this process adding 30 seconds each time. Students are enjoying the game while writing with no pressure.

There are other ways to get students to free write. Class yearbooks with mini-autobiographies, class newspapers, group effort plays, pen pals, and class books (the continuing saga of the "Incredible Bulk"; Mahieu and McCray, 1979, p. 24) are real projects, fun to read and do. Poetry offers many writing possibilities. Because it's too personal, I feel it should never be graded, but this doesn't deny differing qualities. Certainly some poems are superior to others. And, in some instances, the teacher will want to help the student revise the poem. Poetry is to be nurtured, elicited, encouraged--but never graded.

After the prewriting,or fluency practice, comes the writing stage, followed by revision. Actually, since the writing process is recursive, some of each division occurs at the same time. Even though constant exploring and revising go on while one writes, it's convenient to separate the sections of the writing process in order to understand how it works, where the emphasis lies.

In essence, we may be able to help our students write better by allowing them to develop fluency, to explore their own thoughts, and to give them concrete help in the classroom rather than spend twenty to forty hours of our own time grading unsatisfactory, unfinished work, only to have our "meticulous comments" filed "in a notebook--or a trashcan" (Newkirk, 1979, p. 35).

To avoid having our comments end in the "round file," let's use our time productively. Make interesting assignments. Explain them thoroughly. Use prewriting, brainstorming. Give class time for writing early drafts. Editing and responding can be done in any number of ways during the class. Student and teacher response and involvement are essential. Encouragement and adequate revision time help students shape their papers. A laboratory approach finds the teacher conferring with individual students while the others are working independently--writing, reading each other's papers, and revising. Newkirk advises that "the most crucial change is the need for the teacher to learn to read papers quickly and to respond in a way that helps the students revise their work" (p. 35).

Research suggests that this approach is feasible. A study was done in Minneapolis with 103 students, grades ten through twelve. They were arranged in three groups: no evaluation, teacher evaluation, and student self-evaluation. All three groups worked on rough drafts. The students involved in self-evaluation used a rating sheet that asked open-ended questions about focus, sequence, supporting information, overall quality, and need for change. The results of the study showed that the rough drafts evaluated by the teacher rather than the students led to greater degrees of change, higher fluency, and greater differences in support on final drafts (Beach, 1979, pp. 111-119). In another study, Lynch and Klemans showed that students believe that personal comments are the most helpful teacher response (1978, pp. 166-180).

Another way to handle the paper load is practiced at Central College in Iowa. Student papers are evaluated in twenty-minute private conferences. None are read ahead of time or privately. While this method is not feasible in most secondary schools, it's so successful at this college that the entire faculty uses it. There's much more feedback orally and personally, less wasted time, more concentration, and a demystification of the grading process. There is always a rewrite option and much more gets written and is of better quality (Fassler, 1978, pp. 186-190). Public school teachers could easily adapt some of Central College's techniques to their classrooms. Or, they might try what several Buffalo area schools have established--a Writing Place--a workroom in their school where students can make appointments or

drop in for help on a paper. An English teacher is always there, because the Writing Place supplants a supervision period. All the teachers have attended inservice or classes at the Writing Place pilot project at the State University of New York at Buffalo directed by Ouida Clapp and Charles R. Cooper (Luban, 1978, pp. 30-35).

A teacher can get involved with students another way besides reading papers, commenting, questioning, and conferencing. You might, for instance, write the assignment when they do, and let them read it and comment. You will participate in the difficulty, in the work, in the skill-stretching, the frustration, and the satisfaction. But most of all, you will earn students' respect.

A good teacher interacting with students can help them immensely. Yet there is another source of help that often works even better: the students themselves. Let peer pressure work for you in response groups or one-to-one editing sessions.

In "How to Cut Hours off the Time You Spend Marking Papers"(1981), Frank O'Hare outlines one such peer-editing technique I used as a basis for a three-week experiment involving all six of my classes (three preparations) doing two papers each. The procedure, indeed, saved time, and the papers were so improved in quality that they were far easier and more enjoyable to read. The other value in this method was that the students got involved in responding to each other's papers. They were not just waiting for me to tell them what was right or wrong.

The technique was fairly simple. After completing a draft, the student/author would get two students to write editorial advice about that draft on a separate paper. The editors put comments on the "editorial advice" sheet with numbers or letters before the comments. The only markings on the rough draft were corresponding letters or numbers--no words to clutter up the author's effort. I found that giving points for the editing sheets (easily done on the spot during the period) worked especially well for my average eighth grade and average-and-below ninth grade classes. The author got the points, so he had to insist that his editor do a good job. Of course, editors were to write good comments along with corrections.

I was frankly amazed at how well the system worked. Can you imagine overhearing comments such as, "look, this is a run-on, why don't you . . ." or "can't you put more details in here?" or "this isn't long enough, you haven't said anything"? The students were seriously examining their peers' papers and offering helpful suggestions. "How do you spell . . . ?" was a continual question. There developed friendly rivalry to see who could write the better paper. Almost all the students were working; but this was not chore-time. They really seemed to enjoy their roles as editors. They liked that word. They liked being called authors, too.

The prewriting, writing, editing, and rewriting were done almost entirely in class with the option that they might write for homework and then use the class period for reading. On day one, I introduced the proposed writing topic without over-explaining. This was just to get some thought processes started. After a day or two had passed, we discussed the topic more thoroughly. Part of the period, I would lead a class discussion. Then, I would break the class into small groups where they could generate more ideas and possibilities. The last ten minutes of the period would be totally silent, because, by then, their creativity was at work. Each student would then begin a paper. I insisted that each must write at least one sentence. I told them if things worked well, they could try a paragraph. The amount of time allowed to complete the rough draft would vary depending on the assignment. I found two or three days adequate most times.

One of the advantages of such a procedure is that it can be integrated into other activities. The period may be divided between in-class writing

and free reading or other assignments. This worked especially well in the ninth grade honors class: we used this writing method and worked on Lord of the Flies at the same time. Three or four days after the brainstorming day, we had editing day. The day after that was devoted to writing the final draft in class, except for those darling students who type their papers at home. The finished final draft was handed in with rough draft and editing sheets.

I repeated this procedure twice for all my classes. The ninth grade honors class did a fractured fairy tale (based on an idea I used from Nancy Kersell, Ohio Writing Project, 1980) and a letter or journal from one of the characters in Lord of the Flies. The eighth graders did a five-paragraph essay on various topics based on TV's M*A*S*H* and a paper describing an incident from the past that was exciting, frightening, silly, embarrassing, or just memorable. The low-track ninth graders did a letter, journal, or story from any character's point of view except John or Lorraine in The Pigman and a memory paper as well.

The process of writing was the important thing. These students, by and large, appeared to enjoy both the writing and editing processes. Even my ninth grade "reluctant writers" got into the spirit of things after the initial complaints of "but I don't get it." However, the wonder of this process is that it does lead to such a good product. The papers I received were far superior to any in the past--on all levels.

The other remarkable thing was students' involvement. They became more aware of how a paper is constructed because they were editors, too.

Still another feature of this plan was its flexibility--you can assign three papers using this method and only need to grade one if you map the project out over a month or more. I used the plan for three weeks of school and so graded both papers of each class. Even so, these were usually so rewarding and so much better that the grading went very quickly indeed (one-half to one hour per class). If you do assign three papers, have them keep them in in-class folders. Then each student is to indicate the best paper to be graded. The other two need be scanned only and graded for effort. In this way you can assign more writing to develop their skills while saving yourself from inundation. O'Hare suggests the time you can expect to save:

> Please note that you, as a teacher, are only reading or skimming papers. You are not correcting them in the traditional sense. Except for entering grades, you don't need a pen or pencil in hand. The "red pencil" work has already been done for you by students.
>
> I had approximately 500 teachers in Florida try this evaluation system, and then we averaged the time spent by each teacher. It came out to be 31 minutes for 30 students (or 90 papers). Compare that to the usual 15 minutes per paper spent by the average teacher using traditional marking methods, and you'll get an idea of the time you save. (p. 14)

This kind of intensive writing unit should be used only two or three times a year, but the editing approach may be used for almost any writing assignment. Occasionally, the authors should be their own editors entirely, relying on their own ability and independence.

You might try several other grading procedures to help cut down on the load. Stress oral comments during writing or positive written comments afterwards with options open for rewriting. Or try stressing holistic, general impression grading, a technique teachers find easier after their involvement in the papers' composition process (Cooper, 1977, pp. 3-12). Some teachers like putting no grade on a paper but a commentary instead. The grade is recorded in the grade book. The student has two options after reading what the teacher says: revising the paper or asking what the grade

is (after which no revision is possible) (Birdsall, 1979, pp. 220-222). This encourages paying attention to comments and discourages the "whadjaget" syndrome. Still another system works on check marks. To get a check, the paper must be "B" quality. If it isn't, the student can rewrite till it is. Certain numbers of check marks are needed for various final grades. If the assignment is not up to par, no extensive teacher comments are needed to justify the low grade (Buchholz, 1979, pp. 302-305). Instead, the student makes an appointment to get help.

Research, articles by teachers about successful procedures, and my own experiences all point to spending more time with process instead of product. The irony is that the product will be a superior one. The bonus is that finally we can crawl out from under the paper load.

Black English and Writing:

A Bilingual Approach to the Teaching of Composition

John Webb

At a public elementary school teachers' meeting, I once heard a teacher from a Black inner-city school state, "We should only accept Standard English." I wondered what would have happened if her suggestion had been adopted. If teachers would accept only Standard English, what would be done about the Black English spoken by the students? Would we teachers ignore it or constantly correct our students' Black English usage? Would we reject Black English and try to stamp it out? More importantly, how would the students react? Would they accept our instruction and eagerly learn Standard English? Or would they reject our Standard English instruction and continue to speak Black English?

Educators are torn over this issue. Some, like Joan Morse (1974), believe that Black English has no place in education. Morse feels that Black English, because it is "the shuffling speech of slavery" (p. 839), inhibits the intellectual development of students. Others, like Geneva Smitherman (1974), feel that, because it cannot be separated from Black culture and experience, Black English belongs in school (p. 828).

I have heard the opposing viewpoints on countless occasions--should we or should we not teach Black English? Even the argument seems wrong. To begin with, very few teachers teach Black English. They may accept it in their classroom, but they do not teach it--they couldn't without great difficulty, since few books are written in Black English.

Though we may not be able to teach Black English, neither can we succeed by teaching only Standard English to students who speak Black English. If the pupils' language is ignored or "put down," they may give up. And if Standard English is used exclusively pupils may not understand it. The fact is that students need to learn Standard English to succeed both in school and in most occupations; they need their own language to communicate in their own world outside the school. But they must decide for themselves which language to choose for different occasions. In essence, while Black English must be accepted, Standard English must also be taught.

Those against accepting it believe that Black English is not a language but a substandard, inferior form of English. However, studies within the last decade have shown Black English to be a logical, valid language with its own grammatical structure, its own history. Dillard (1972) traces Black English back to a "creolized version of English based upon a pidgin spoken by slaves; it probably came from the West coast of Africa, almost certainly not directly from Great Britain" (p. 10). Mixed into the creole were words and expressions from pidgin Portuguese. The "Black language" followed the history of the American Black, from slavery to freedom to ghetto oppression to urban life. As the condition of the Blacks changed their language changed. So Black English is different from Standard American English. But it is a language.

As a language, it does not inhibit intellectual growth. William Labov (1973) states that there is nothing in Black English "which will interfere with the development of logical thought, for the logic of Standard English cannot be distinguished from the logic of any other dialect of English by any other test that we can find" (p. 343). Black English has its own logic and its speakers grow intellectually, as do Standard English speakers. This has important considerations for education. To assume that a student's language promotes illogical thought is a dangerous practice. If educators do not accept Black English, according to Labov, we are harming students: "Teachers

are now being told to ignore the language of Negro children as unworthy of attention and useless for learning. They are being taught to hear every utterance of the child as evidence of his mental inferiority. As linguists we are unanimous in condemning this view as bad observation, bad theory and bad practice" (p. 352). In essence, teachers need to accept Black English and help Black English-speaking students to extend and develop their language capabilities.

Since Black English is a different language from Standard English, it makes sense to adopt the bilingual approach to teach Black English speakers. With the bilingual approach, we can teach speakers of one language (Black English) a new language (Standard English), particularly the written version.

By acknowledging both languages in class, a teacher can create a positive environment where Standard written English and Black English co-exist. As Feigeman (1970) states, "discussing these ideas can be beneficial for the students who are aware of the social uses of language, both their own and others. Stating the truth will establish a better rapport between the teacher and the students, and it will help in enlisting their cooperation in the learning task" (p. 89). After acknowledging the validity of Black English, the teacher can compare it to Standard written English.

There are several ways to work with Black English and Standard written English in the classroom. One is to move from what Kochman (1969) calls high to low context situations. High context situations are familiar and require informal language, such as talking with friends. Low context situations are not familiar and require formal language, like applying for a job (p. 174). In writing instruction, it is necessary to take students from high context situations (what they know) to low context situations (what they don't know). Michael Linn (1975) describes the successful writing course in these terms: "An effective composition program aims toward developing the students' ability to deal effectively with low context situations. To do this, the student must learn to handle situations that are not dependent upon shared information; he must learn to provide the necessary background information. A low context writing situation prohibits the speaker from relying upon the non-verbal features which are characteristic of intimate and casual speech" (p. 152).

Another way of teaching students to move from their language into a language of writing success is to extend the student's language. This extension is similar to Linn's design of moving from high to low context writing. Teachers should extend Black English and through it teach Standard English. As Bailey (1973) maintains: "If the composition course is to have any success, it must be designed to extend rather than to alter the linguistic resources that the student brings with him into the classroom" (p. 395).

Once the two languages of situations have been acknowledged, the teacher should begin to focus on areas of specific concern regarding Black English and writing. Standard English correctness and usage are the primary concerns of writing teachers. Revision is also tied into this correctness; it is the phase in which most correcting occurs.

Here are a few suggestions that I follow:

1. Allow Black English in quotes.
2. Above Black English usage write the Standard form and label it with one of the terms mentioned before.

These two suggestions allow students to see the differences between the two languages and select the appropriate usage.

Two other areas of concern are audience and purpose. The use of Black English will vary according to the purpose of the written work and who it was written for. The following are my own suggestions relating to audience and purpose:

1. Black English can be acceptable when written for an audience of Black English speakers.
2. Black English may not be acceptable when written for an audience of non-Black English speakers.
3. Black English could be acceptable in informal written work.
4. Black English may not be acceptable in formal written work.

There are exceptions to these suggestions. Teachers should follow their own instincts when in doubt.

Still another practical way to teach Standard written English from Black English is to treat one problem at a time. Many teachers use this technique in a variety of subjects. They determine what the common difficulties are, and then they work to correct them. When another common problem arises, it is corrected. If the writing teacher finds a common Black English usage, she will teach the Standard usage in relation to it. For example, if a student continually drops the final -s off third person present tense verbs (as in the Black English, He read the book), the teacher will work with the student until the final -s is added (as in the Standard written English, He reads the book). In this way, students begin writing in their own language, while the teacher helps change common Black English usages to Standard English. J. L. Collins (1979) speaks about this one-step-at-a-time approach: "Some good advice for helping students learn to write and to overcome non-standard forms in their writing is this: Treat one problem at a time" (p. 49).

A related method of teaching Standard English from Black English is to use contrastive linguistics. Irwin Feigeman has devised many contrastive exercises that can be useful in teaching Standard written English (p. 89). These drills typically involve a teacher stimulus followed by a student response. They can be used in either oral or written form. For example, if the teacher wrote He work hard, the student would write He works hard. These sentences could be reversed, with the Standard sentence as the impulse and the Black English sentence as the response. Since these drills teach students both forms they enable the students to choose the appropriate form for a respective writing piece. Thus, students are able to understand and use Standard written English by association with their own Black English. Exercises like those developed by Feigeman help students bridge the gap between the two languages.

A bridge allows a traveler to cross a river and to get to the other side. In the same way, bilingual instruction provides a bridge of comparison for the Black English speaker to cross over into Standard written English. There is a basal reading program called "Bridge: A Cross-Cultural Reading Program" developed by Gary Simpkins, a professor at Westfield State College. With his program, Simpkins has raised reading scores in Washington, Phoenix, Chicago, Memphis, and Macon County, Alabama schools (Sheils and Manning, 1976). The "bridge" program is a good model for teaching writing to Black English speakers.

Certainly there is much more research needed concerning writing instruction and Black English. But I believe that a bilingual approach to teaching Standard English to Black English speakers is practical, real, and effective. Amid the controversy, it is one way for teachers to deal with teaching Standard English to Black English speakers. It treats Black English as a language equal to Standard English. It acknowledges that Black English speakers need to learn Standard written English yet still maintain their own language. Most important, it gives students the freedom to choose when, where, and how to use the two languages.

Popular Culture and the Teaching of Usage

Joseph Luke Libis, Jr.

In the real world, citizens need to have job applications considered and financial aid requests and loans reviewed; they need to have new job proposals weighed and broken toaster requests evaluated. Fairly or unfairly, people are judged by physical appearance, by the way they dress, and by the way they use language in speaking and in writing. And since our students will want to enhance their chances of being considered and judged favorably, they need to know the usage considered "correct."

Usage, however, is sometimes studied as if all the decisions regarding what is acceptable and what is not acceptable in language have been made and then etched in stone. According to this doctrine, all that is required is simply to learn the labels that identify a given usage as "correct" or "incorrect," "good" or "bad." If our language could be made perfect and fixed forever, good speech and writing would be matters of mere obedience to definite rules established for the language, a veritable catechism of "Thou shalts" and, perhaps more accurately, "Thou shalt nots." But the world changes; and as new experiences and processes affect the lives of human beings, their language also changes. Since the language is not fixed, the question of "good usage" is an open and complex one. As concerned teachers, what we should do is show our students that the standards of good speech and writing do not come from a set of unchanging prescriptions but from a knowledge of the language and a sensitivity to its rich variety and its ability to express many shades of meaning.

One way of teaching usage is by having students investigate popular culture, particularly advertising, because it is a pervasive and influential popular art form. From such an investigation, students will discover that language is a living, growing thing, shaped and changed by usage. And since advertising is so pervasive and unavoidable in our society, it is the perfect vehicle for teaching usage.

Clearly, Madison Avenue, with its history of grammar and usage "violations," runs head-on into the camp of those more conservative codifiers demanding strict adherence to "correct English." A sampling from current and recent advertisements provides an illustration of this conflict: "Winston tastes good, like a cigarette should" ("What do you want? Good grammar or good taste?"); "Us Tareyton smokers would rather fight than switch"; "Wendy's: Ain't no reason to go anyplace else"; "Gold Star: One helluva chew." Meaning, however, is not compromised when one says or writes "like a cigarette should," or "less students," or "to quickly go." English becomes richer as thousands of words originally functioning as one part of speech or with one meaning or usage are subsequently used quite differently (Finegan, 1980, p. 166).

As writing teachers, we need to show our students that there are, in general, three major considerations that determine their usage when they write: what they want to communicate, why and how the audience will receive what they say, and the connotation. In simpler terms, the content, the motive, and the tone (Pooley, 1974, p. 26).

Ads and advertising copy provide a readily available way to teach these principles. Studying the ads, the students become aware of the numerous criteria for judging their effectiveness--purpose, audience level (target), emotional appeal, voice, tone, imagery, etc. Advertising copy also provides examples of effective use of "unconventional," or what traditionalists call "wrong" usage. When ads employ sentence fragments, punctuation oddities, and other long-standing "taboos," our students see that they have been carefully chosen for a particular advantage they give the advertiser. Students can discuss why particular words or structures were chosen rather than others

which have generally the same meaning. In this type of exercise they are learning something about discovery, invention, the whole prewriting process of abstracting ideas and formulating theses as well as seeing examples of virtually every aspect of language usage: coined words, levels of diction, slang, jargon, figurative language, etc.

First, you might have students consider the ad's content, usually a kind of warning, a fact, an observation, a decision, or a judgment about goods or services. Advertising at various times uses all of these, whether it be public service messages or exhortations for whiter laundry. The communication may vary in complexity from a monosyllabic cry of warning (as in "ouch!" "Ugh!" "Quick!") to an elaborately constructed sequence of phrases and sentences. Next, you can study the ad's purpose and its influence on usage. In the following examples, each product asks a question voicing widely differing intentions: (1) Aren't you glad you use dial? Don't you wish everybody did? (Dial soap); (2) How's your love life? (Ultra-Brite toothpaste); (3) Wouldn't you really rather have a Buick? (Buick automobiles); (4) What do you want? Good grammar or good taste? (Winston Cigarettes).

Four other products make statements to their audiences, each for different purposes: (1) This Bud's for you. (Budweiser Beer); (2) Nobody can do it like McDonald's can. (McDonald's Restaurants); (3) You've come a long way, baby. (Virginia Slim Cigarettes); and (4) Coke adds life. (Coca-Cola). Students begin to see that the ads, through their language, not only call attention to the products but also affirm the consumer's self-confidence, common sense, good judgment, or taste and style.

Closely related to the purpose or intent of the communication is the third important element that determines language choice--the tone of the message. Tone may be defined as the "appropriateness" of the word choice to the meaning and intention of the communicator. There are clearly recognized gradations of tone in the expression of any idea and certainly in most advertising messages, spoken or written. The commonplace occurrence of going to bed provides an example: (1) I think I'll sack out; or, I think I'll hit the sack. (2) It's time for me to turn in. (3) I think I'll go to bed. (4) I believe it's time to retire. (5) I shall withdraw and seek repose. Each of these obviously expresses the same idea, but each one is not appropriate in all situations.

The development of new methods of language analysis in the past few decades has been influential in establishing a more pragmatic view of standards of correct usage. Data of how Americans actually speak and write their language have been gathered, sorted, and analyzed, revealing that the varieties of American English are rich and varied. Certainly, studying advertising reveals a diverse application of usage. Even though rhetoric textbooks establish labels for levels of usage, such as "formal written," "formal spoken," "informal written," and "informal spoken," Madison Avenue has roamed freely among these four and has selected and intertwined elements from all, sometimes in the same message. Why should we expect less--or more--from our own students who are learning the freedom that language gives them?

The Development of Writing Abilities

Barbara K. Riggs

When can a teacher begin developing a child's writing abilities? Can it begin in a first-grade classroom? As a first-grade teacher, I can definitely say that most first graders are ready to write, though not all students are ready to write at the same time.

Donald Graves (1979) found in his study of a six-year-old's writing that even six-year-olds go through the same stages--prewriting, writing, and revision--as do adults. Prewriting takes the form of drawing out their story first. Of course, first graders do not go through elaborate revisions, making several drafts; however, they do revise sometimes by reading aloud their composition and receiving input from their peers. Another theorist, Peter Elbow (1973) believes that response groups can be very successful, no matter the age of the writing group.

Teachers of writing must ask very young students to choose topics from daily experiences. They can choose their own or those that come from daily experiences in the classroom--a story session with the teacher, for instance. Field trips also foster lots of language experiences for students. During freewriting activities after such trips children can discover, while writing, what they really want to write about.

Piaget (Ginsburg and Opper, 1975) suggests that children, especially young ones, learn best from concrete activities. I always try to follow the teaching of a new concept with a concrete activity. For example, after reading "The Gingerbread Boy" in class, we made gingerbread, a terrific learning experience for the students, and a tasty one. It is amazing how much language development occurs when students are active participants. Piaget also tells us that the teacher should not teach, but should encourage the child to learn by manipulating things. What the child needs is not formal teaching, but an opportunity to learn.

Using the language approach to writing is a good way to get young students to write. They must understand a topic in order to write about it. Talking about a certain topic and allowing much discussion--an effective prewriting exercise--can really motivate a child to write about the idea. According to Phillip Lopate (1978), the more interesting the discussion, the better the writing will be that follows. He also states that because the only time many children will ever write is in school, teachers must give their students much opportunity to write.

There are a number of effective writing assignments for first graders. A collaborative poem, for instance, written by the entire class is a good way to begin in first grade. Later in the year, students may wish to write their own poetry. A tape-recorded story is also a favorite. Many times young students do not understand that the story they can tell is the same as if it were written, because they can't connect the oral to the written discourse. By using a tape recorder, the students can record their stories. Then, the children listen to their own voices and later, the teacher will write down the stories. After reading the stories, children can see the relationships between written and spoken language.

A relaxed, unstructured classroom is important to inspire young writers. Lopate, for instance, suggests that classrooms offer choices for writers such as different writing utensils, choices of colored paper, and different seating arrangements. Walter Petty (1978), following the lead of Graves and others, concludes that the informal classroom environments give greater choice and produce more writing. He also tells us that the young children wrote better when given topics by choice rather than assignment. Assigned writing inhibited range, content, and amount of writing.

Herbert Kohl's article (1975) about teaching the "unteachable" tells us that children will not write if they are afraid to talk. They suspect teachers and are reluctant to be honest. It is our job as teachers to build trust, based on honesty, with our students. Sometimes it is hard to build this trust, but we must try if we expect honesty in students' writing. As teachers, we can provide the framework for many written exercises, but the substance of the children's responses must be drawn from their life and imagination and their willingness to share it with us.

Teachers, administrators, and parents, as well, need to learn to appreciate children's writing. If we follow Kenneth Kantor's (1979) advice, we will circle in red ink everything the writers do correctly. His idea of accenting the positive is a drastic and necessary change from circling in red ink all the mistakes. As he tells us, "we need a greater appreciation of children's writing. . . .[Seeing errors not as deficiencies, but as signs of growth--indications that the writer might be stretching for a higher level of understanding or capacity. . . . Growth demands risk taking" (p. 743). If we provide such an accepting atmosphere we are rewarded with more writing and more enthusiastic writers. The real key or solution to a positive self-image is a sense of achievement in writing. This can only come if students are given the opportunity to write and write often. As Kantor states, "Besides more time, smaller class sizes, and higher salaries, teachers need to be freed from the negative influences of accountability, 'back-to-basic,' and myopic testing procedures, so as to be their best selves, and to see their students not as incomplete adults, but as children involved in processes of becoming" (p. 746).

After writing is produced, we are faced with a number of problems. Should all of the writings be graded? Does spelling, punctuation, correct grammar add to the grade, or if done incorrectly, subtract from the grade? Kohl tells us that once children care about writing and see it as important to themselves, they want to write well. Then they easily accept the discipline of learning to write correctly. Admittedly, we must relinquish our red pens--at least in the beginning.

Perhaps our school systems in the United States should take a look at some of the English schools. Howard Blake (1975) describes a new British system which emphasizes writing, integrating it with all work. In these schools children learn to write by writing. Most instruction is individualized and evaluation is done one-to-one with student and teacher. Children see their teachers more as resource persons than as instructors. Some day soon, our schools must begin to place such importance on writing in the elementary schools.

APPENDIX A

Included is a poem written by a second grader. I had him in first grade the previous year. When he brought his Young Authors book to read to my class, I asked him to give me a copy of this poem. His book was a collection of poems he had written during the year.

Where is love hiding
Love is hiding in a cloud!
Love is within your heart hidden
away. Love is in a lonely boat
that no one rides. Love is all your
memories that hide in your mind
forever. Love is hiding somewhere
bring it out and give it to
someone in your life.

APPENDIX B

Suggestions to Use to Assign Writing to Young Children

1. Sentence Starters--Give students several topic starters printed on poster paper with colorful pictures, such as a picture of Superman with the words, "If I were Superman, I would . . .."If students do not want these, let them choose their own topics.

2. Provide many hours of oral reading to students. This instills in them an appreciation of books. There should be many varieties, such as fiction, nursery rhymes, fairy tales, and poetry. Primary children really enjoy poetry.

3. Provide language experiences. These include activities inside the classroom, such as cooking, science experiments, etc. Outside the classroom, use activities such as planting flowers, collecting fresh snow to make ice cream, or walking in the rain.

4. Give the "three-sentence assignment." Given a choice of any topic, write only three sentences about it. This forces the student to use the prewriting stage. This usually happens mentally or drawing pictures instead of actual writing.

5. Vacations, before school or during school breaks, offer many children the motivation to write and share with the class.

6. Use spelling words for a particular feel in a short story. Allow them to use any form of word, plural, past tense, etc. They can illustrate the story and the stories can be placed on a bulletin board.

7. Become a part of the Young Authors Program. The child writes a short story, some poems, etc. and the teacher binds the book. The child illustrates the book and can share his book with other classes and grade levels. In our district, we have a Young Authors Conference. The best books are selected. These authors can go to workshops designed for them and get to see a famous children's book author or illustrator. This is a great motivation for writing and reading.

8. The first fire drill or tornado drill, when everyone is scared, especially first graders, provides students with special feelings to write about.

9. Holidays--Much is done in the primary grades with holidays. Short stories, poems, plays can be produced by just observing and discussing decorations in the room during many holidays.

10. The first snow, when all students and teachers rush excitedly to the windows to watch, provides real-life situations to write about. Some may like it, others may not. Write about your feelings. Follow this with the cutting out of snowflakes and hang them in the room. Since this cannot be planned as to the day or time, we must learn to be flexible.

11. A film or filmstrip can be used to study a new place. My first graders studied Hawaii, Alaska, and many others. Lectures are boring, no matter what grade level. Audio-visual materials are very helpful and enjoyable. A writing assignment can be fun and can reinforce learning. Compare and contrast Hawaii and Alaska.

One can see from these examples that writing does not need to be a specified time every day and that time only. By using writing in as many subject areas as possible, teachers can allow students many opportunities to write and develop their writing abilities.

The Structure of the Expository Paragraph:

Conflicting Theories

Irma McCorkle

The modern controversy about the paragraph reaches farther back into history than modern political conflicts do. It begins with a disagreement over the origin of the term. Was the first paragraph mark (graphos) a "¶" that some ancient Greek placed in the margin beside (para), an unindented sheet of manuscript writing, in order to remember the place (Baker, 1969, p. 16), or was it a horizontal mark that he slashed underneath the first two or three letters of a line to indicate the closing of a unit of discourse (Burke, 1969, p. 5)?

There is more disagreement than this among present-day rhetoricians concerning the definition of the paragraph, resulting in sometimes bitter arguments among educators about how the paragraph should be taught. Is it a set form or a pattern of sentences to which the content should be molded, does the content determine its form, or does it have qualities of both of these extremes? And why should research and theories of paragraph structure concern classroom teachers who are interested only in finding teaching strategies that will improve students' writing?

Mina Shaughnessy (1979) suggests that teachers who are not familiar with the research may ask students to rely on intuition to guide them in developing their written paragraphs. The problem with such guidance, however, is that intuition may be derived from conventions other than those of written composition. Conversation, for example, is not limited to the development of single topics. It allows for the introduction of irrelevant information, which may then cause a sudden shift in the topic. It also allows for assertions to be stated and left unsupported. Objective test questions require students to recall single answers and do not train them to exercise sound reasoning in the pursuit of contradictions, ambiguities, and supporting evidence (pp. 18-19). Shaughnessy also observes that some teachers who distrust the students' intuitions in structuring their paragraphs merely prescribe the specific rules and formulae that they learned when they were in school. Students have difficulty with such arbitrary schemes which are inconsistent with both the spoken English to which they are accustomed and much written English as well (p. 17).

On the other hand, teachers familiar with paragraph theories will have a more accurate understanding of the way that the structures of sentences work together with their meaning to create units of discourse. They will also have a theoretical framework in which to place the various approaches to teaching the paragraph, approaches that range from free writing to copying paragraphs written by professional writers, and they will be able to select approaches that are most compatible with both the learning styles of individual students and the subject matter of individual pieces of writing (Gebhardt, 1979, p. 125). Clearly teachers of composition need to be familiar with various theories of paragraph structure.

The theories proposed since the first attempt to describe the written expository paragraph in 1866 fall into two categories, according to whether they describe the paragraph primarily as a unit of form or a unit of meaning. The difference between the two is one of emphasis, since content and form are both present in each paragraph and are both considered in each of the theories.

Early theories of the development of expository paragraphs were derived from logic rather than from empirical analysis of actual paragraphs. Alexander Bain, a logician, defined the paragraph as a group of sentences with a central purpose that is stated at the beginning and developed through a sequence of supporting statements according to set principles of construction. Others built on this theory without examining its assumptions, adding that a

paragraph is a miniature composition (Stern, 1979, p. 110). Barrett Wendell combined Bain's six principles of paragraph construction into unity, coherence, and emphasis. He defined the term "unity" as that aspect of paragraph structure which relates to the idea, "coherence" as that aspect which deals with the logical arrangement of ideas and use of transitional devices (Lathrop, 1969, p. 31), and "emphasis" as that aspect which places visual prominence on paragraph parts in proportion to their importance (Lathrop, p. 32).

Still another theorist, Francis Christensen (1976), developed a generative rhetoric of the paragraph. After allegedly analyzing many paragraphs and finding them to embody a structure based on a beginning general sentence and followed by more specific sentences, he proposed that the paragraph is a sequence of structurally related sentences of three levels of generality, showing these levels of generality visually in a diagram. He placed the topic sentence next to the margin and labeled it 1. The second sentence, which is subordinate to the topic sentence and at a lower level of generality (i.e., more specific), he indented under the topic sentence and labeled it 2. If the third sentence were at the same level of generality as the second sentence, he set it down directly beneath the second sentence and labeled it 2, and proceeded to do the same for each subsequent sentence, as in this example:

Coordinate Sequence Paragraph
1. Self-respect comes from within.
    2. It cannot be bought, because it is never for sale.
    2. It comes to us when we are alone, in quiet moments and quiet places.
    2. It comes to us when we suddenly realize that, knowing the good, we have done it; knowing the beautiful, we have served it, and knowing the truth, we have spoken it.

Coordinate sentences are often parallel in structure, or together provide a semantic grouping of examples, reasons, or details. If the third sentence were less general than the second sentence, Christensen indented it under the second sentence and labeled it 3, and continued in this way for each of the remaining sentences in the paragraph.

Subordinate Sequence Paragraph
1. Some modern rhetoricians have identified several difficulties with the way in which early paragraph theories were developed.
    2. One is that they were derived from the principles of logic, rather than from an examination of actual paragraphs.
        3. As a result, paragraphs were formulated as inductive or deductive sequences of sentences.
            4. But sentences constructed according to these formulae are often quite different from the sentences that successful writers use.

Subordinate sentences give examples, reasons, facts, or details about a more general sentence. These two types of sequence may be combined to produce a mixed sequence paragraph, in which subordinate sentences are added to clarify a more general statement and coordinate sentences are used to emphasize or enumerate items named in a more general sentence (p. 168).

Mixed Sequence Paragraph
1. Marriage makes of two fragmented lives a whole.
    2. It gives to two purposeless lives a work, and doubles the strength of each to perform it.
    2. It gives to two questioning natures a reason, and something to live for.
        3. It gives a new gladness to the sunshine, a new fragrance to the flowers, a new beauty to the earth, and a new mystery to life.

Mark Twain

Other theorists have incorporated Christensen's model of topic sentence, coordinate sentences, and subordinate sentences into their own theories of paragraph structure.

Like Christensen, Josephine Miles (1976) also found the paragraph to be composed of a topic sentence and structurally linked supporting sentences. Her model defines three functional paragraph parts: assertion, development of the assertion, and connections which relate statements to other parts of the paragraph (p. 184). Her concept has also proven an important foundation for theorists.

A. L. Becker (1976) defined the paragraph in a tagmemic theory, focusing on the structure of the paragraph as it relates to the content of the sentences that comprise it. He suggested that most expository paragraphs follow one of two patterns: topic, restriction (optional), and illustration (TRI); and problem and either solution or cause (PS) (p. 156). The following is a TRI paragraph.

> Teachers often criticize a colleague or an administrator unjustly. (T) Sometimes these criticisms grow out of feelings that are caused by matters actually extraneous to the subject of the complaint. (R) Perhaps teachers are stressed to the limit of their tolerance by health, family, or classroom problems. (I) Perhaps they are unable to step out of their classroom role as critic, judge, and final decision maker. (I) Or perhaps they feel that their own images are threatened by someone who knows things that they don't know or who does things that they don't do; to compensate they point out his incompetence in areas in which they are strong. (I)

Becker offered as support for his tagmemic model the statement that readers, when asked, can consistently divide paragraphs according to these two structures (p. 161).

Richard Larson's (1969) description of paragraph structure is a modification of both Christensen's and Becker's models. Larson stated that each sentence contributes its own meaning to a paragraph and also affects the reader's understanding of the sentences that surround it, thus controlling understanding of the whole paragraph. A sentence may perform one or more of the following functions: "state, restate, expand, particularize, exemplify, define, describe, narrate, qualify, concede, refute, evaluate, identify a cause or result, compare or contrast, summarize, or conclude" (pp. 50-51). Because sentences may serve in such a large variety of roles, Larson did not attempt to formulate a basic pattern for the paragraph.

Recently, Richard Warner (1979) proposed a formula which combines Becker's TRI formula with Miles's assertion-development-connections model and Christensen's structured sequences of topic sentences, coordinate sentences, and subordinate sentences. Warner's formula for the paragraph is T (L) D, where T is the topic sentence which includes the topic plus the theme (p. 152), L is an optional limiter of the kinds of supporting information that may be included in the rest of the paragraph, and D is the developer in which statements may be linked by coordinating transitions (e.g., furthermore, moreover) or subordinating transitions (e.g., for example, therefore) (p. 153). He claimed that his college students arrived at this model inductively in an intuitive analysis of analytic paragraphs.

Arthur Stern (1979), however, reported an experiment that calls into question Becker's and Warner's statements that readers can divide paragraphs according to their respective models. Stern copied several expository paragraphs without indentations and gave them to over one hundred English teachers, all of whom believed that paragraphs have an identifiable topic sentence and a logical structure. He found great disagreement over the number of paragraphs and the location of the paragraph breaks. Only five of his

subjects paragraphed the passages as the original authors had (p. 109). This may also suggest that Bain's, Christensen's, and Miles's models are inaccurate, for if the paragraph has the structure that they claim it has, readers should be able to recognize it even in unindented passages.

Further doubt is cast upon the adequacy of structural models by Richard Braddock (1974). He tested two of Bain's principles against paragraphs in essays selected from The Atlantic, Harper's, The New Yorker, The Reporter, and Saturday Review and found that fewer than 13% began with topic sentences. Moreover, almost half of the paragraphs contained no topic sentence at all. Thus, he concludes, the models of Bain, Christensen, Becker, Warner, and Miles do not apply to all expository paragraphs.

A study done by Richard Meade and Geiger Ellis (1976) supports this position. They analyzed paragraphs from contemporary nonfiction and found that fewer than half exhibited traditional methods of paragraph development (p. 195). Instead, they found that most paragraphs were developed by additional comment, reasons, or examples, either separately or in combination. They speculated that the content and the writer's purpose determine the type of development. For instance, an explanation is supported by examples, an argument by reasons, and a statement of opinion by additional comment (pp. 199-200).

Interestingly, the search continues. Although these theorists and researchers have studied much and written volumes about the paragraph, aside from their basic conviction that it does have a describable form, there does not seem to be a single specific principle upon which these scholars can all agree. Each of their theories illuminates some aspects of some paragraphs, but no one model adequately describes every paragraph of exposition.

Not all definitions of the expository paragraph prescribe a formulaic structure. Other theorists focus on the paragraph as a semantic unit, either as a self-contained entity or as part of a larger piece of discourse. They describe paragraph structure as the natural result of the effective expression of its content. For them, the content shapes the structure.

H. B. Lathrop (1969) viewed a paragraph as the development of a central theme. If the writer focuses the entire paragraph on a main idea, his or her paragraph will naturally have coherence and emphasis without deliberate manipulation to make it conform to a particular mold. Thus, on the basis of logic, Lathrop reduced Wendell's triad to one, unity, theorizing that coherence and emphasis will evolve as a consequence of this single fundamental principle of paragraph construction (p. 34).

Paul Rodgers (1976) defined the paragraph as a segment of written discourse that is emphasized by indentations and does not possess any particular internal structure (p. 179). He looks at entire compositions as composed of unified and coherent thought units which may or may not coincide with paragraph divisions. These rhetorical structures, which he terms "stadia of discourse," are intuitively perceived units of thought, composed of a single topic statement and other statements which justify, clarify, or emphasize the topic statement. This corresponds to Christensen's sequence of topic sentences, coordinate sentences, and subordinate sentences. However, Rodgers says that the writers are not always conscious of the form they are creating; they simply use structures that seem natural and sensible in order to lead the reader to understand, accept, and remember the main ideas. A stadium of discourse may be a paragraph in itself, or it may be combined with other stadia to form a paragraph (pp. 179-180). It may also be divided, as D'Angelo suggests, into several paragraphs in order to shift the rhythm, introduce new ideas, change the tone, emphasize important content (p. 115), conform to conventions of acceptable paragraph length, or create rhetorical effects such as formality or informality, smoothness or abruptness (Stern, p. 113). For Rodgers, the paragraph, a flexible unit within a larger discourse, acquires a structure as a result of the author's considerations of his reader, his subject

matter, and the composition as a whole.

Frank D'Angelo's theory of the paragraph combines elements of Rodgers's stadium of discourse theory with elements of Christensen's generative rhetoric of the paragraph. It sees the entire composition as a unit that begins with an organizing sentence and is developed by sentences that are related to it by coordination or subordination. Sometimes writers intuitively divide the composition into paragraphs, but sometimes they make these divisions deliberately. For D'Angelo (1979), the true nature of the paragraph lies between Rodgers's theory and Christensen's model (p. 115).

Although Lathrop, Rodgers, and D'Angelo each focuses on different aspects of the expository paragraph, all of them agree that sometimes, if not always, paragraph structure should result not from mechanical manipulation of sentences into a formulaic pattern, but rather from a natural development of the main idea as it evolves with the flow of the thought.

Many strategies have been devised for teaching students to write paragraphs that will satisfy the requirements of particular theories, and supporters of different theories advocate widely varied teaching practices. In order for these strategies to be most effective, however, two essentials of successful writing must be present: student motivation, a complex phenomenon which involves a comfortable student-teacher relationship, the student's interest in subject matter and audience, the student's self-confidence as a writer, and many other factors; and emphasis on the role of the particular strategy in the whole writing process, a context that involves stages of prewriting, writing, and revising. In my experience, high school and college students have completed exercises more successfully and transferred the skills to their other writing more consistently when these two prerequisites are present.

Paragraph-teaching strategies range from highly prescriptive ones that specify patterns and formulae, to vaguely general ones that shape a developing idea into a unit with a beginning, a middle, and an end, to impressionistic ones that allow students to discover their own paragraph structure (D'Angelo, 1979, p. 122). Teachers would do well to select exercises that seem most compatible with their own convictions about the nature of paragraph structure and with their students' learning styles, level of thought development, and stylistic strengths and weaknesses. Since the materials and instructions for even a single strategy are quite lengthy, it would be possible to include only a very few in this limited space. It would be more practical to list books and articles in which these lessons are described in detail, with some information about the nature of the exercise and the type of theoretical structure that it illustrates. Page numbers appear in parentheses within the annotations so that readers may easily refer to the original sources for complete information.

Annotated Bibliography of Works Containing Strategies for Teaching Paragraph Structure

Baker, Sheridan. The Practical Stylist. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1969. College-level text, Warner's theory. Chapter 3, "Paragraphs," states that paragraphs in essays should be constructed for the reader's convenience (16). Diagrams introductory paragraph as a funnel beginning with an opening generalization and ending with the thesis statement (19); middle paragraphs as empty rectangular frames beginning with a topic sentence that includes a transition from the preceding paragraph, filled with clean and interesting details, and ending with an emphatic statement (17); and end paragraphs as upside-down funnels beginning with the thesis of the entire essay and ending with a general statement that reiterates, summarizes, and emphasizes (22).

Charnock, James. "Paragraphing Made Simple." Teacher, 95, No. 5 (1978), pp. 90-92. Upper elementary level assignment suggestions, Rodgers's

theory. Suggests some assignments that allow students to discover paragraph divisions by writing about topics that fall into easily identifiable categories (90), other assignments that reinforce knowledge of paragraphing by asking students to identify the reason for a division in paragraphs of published writing as a different time, place, speaker, or topic (92).

Cohan, Carol. "Writing Effective Paragraphs." Rpt. in Composition and Its Teaching: Articles from College Composition and Communication During the Editorship of Edward P. J. Corbett. Ed. Richard C. Gebhardt. Ohio Council of Teachers of English Language Arts, 1979, pp. 106-108. Any grade level, Lathrop's theory. Strategy for achieving paragraph unity: turn the topic sentence into a question and eliminate any item in the paragraph which does not partially answer it (107-108).

Crawford, Carol. "Backyards I Have Known and Loved--and Why." Arizona English Bulletin: Rhetoric and Composition in the English Classroom, 16, No. 2 (1974), pp. 67-74. Any grade level, Christensen's theory. Recommends teaching concepts of coordination and subordination with individual sentences before attempting it in the paragraph (73).

Cunningham, Donald. "Analyzing Paragraph Structure." Writing Exercises from Exercise Exchange. Ed. Littleton Long. Urbana, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1976, pp. 45-47. College level, Christensen's theory. First assigns professionally written paragraphs to be diagramed in a modification of Christensen's 3-margin outline, then assigns diagrams of the students' own paragraphs in order to check the development of the topic sentences (47).

Daiker, Donald, Andrew Kerek, Max Morenberg. The Writer's Options: College Sentence Combining. New York: Harper & Row, 1979. College level text, Warner's theory. Uses sentence combining to teach a variety of syntactic structures (relative clauses, participles, appositives, absolutes, prepositional phrases, subordinate clauses, coordinate clauses, noun substitutes), then shows how these structures may be used to produce paragraphs with effective unity, coherence, and emphasis.

Fortner, Hal. "Composition Criteria." The Arizona English Bulletin: Rhetoric and Composition in the English Classroom, 16, No. 2 (1974), pp. 139-145. High school level, Warner's theory. Develops criteria sheet for analyzing errors in student compositions and assigns a number of points for each item. Items of "Paragraph Structure" evaluate paragraphs for topic sentences, specific examples, and unity, and range from 6 points for a paragraph that has a topic sentence and outstanding support to 0 points for a "mess" (141).

Higgins, Joseph, and Richard Graves. "New Rhetorics and Adolescent Fiction: Are They Compatible?" The Arizona English Bulletin: Rhetoric and Composition in the English Classroom, 16, No. 2 (1974), pp. 170-174. High school level, Christensen's, Becker's, and Rodgers's theories. Suggests having students analyze passages from adolescent fiction according to the rhetorics of Christensen, Becker, and Rodgers. Mentions their significance in the teaching of composition (170), but lets the reader decide how these analyses might be used in writing classes.

Irmscher, William. Teaching Expository Writing. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1979. Any grade level, D'Angelo's theory. Chapter 9, "Teaching Structure" (pp. 94-106), argues the necessity of teaching students to write paragraphs according to a prescribed structure of internal connections, specifically Rodgers's, Christensen's, and Becker's. Such practice will help students to internalize an intuitive paragraph sense that will enable their own thoughts to flow naturally into well-organized paragraphs. Describes teaching strategies on pp. 105-106.

King, Lauren. "Stating a Thesis Precisely." Writing Exercises from Exercise Exchange. Ed. Littleton Long. Urbana, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1976, pp. 42-43. High school and college level, Warner's theory. Teaches students to develop thesis statements fully by identifying words that need to be explained as "dark spots," then examining the clarifying statements for other "dark spots" that need to be explained, and so on throughout the essay (43).

Koch, Carl, and James Brazil. Strategies for Teaching the Composition Process. Urbana, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1978. All grade levels, theories of Wendell, Miles, Rodgers. Suggests that students be shown that they have an intuitive sense of paragraph structure by giving them a randomly ordered list of sentences that were originally parts of a single paragraph, having the students reorganize the sentences into a unified paragraph, and asking them to identify the clues which aided them in the ordering task. Offers three lists of jumbled sentences (73). Also suggests specific exercises for using group work to help students write paragraphs that develop a topic sentence in terms of the general thesis statement (77-81).

Larson, Richard. "Sentences in Action: A Technique for Analyzing Paragraphs." Rpt. in Paragraphs in Context. Ed. Virginia Burke. Indianapolis, Ind.: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1969. College level, Larson's theory. Presents three questions for students to ask about each sentence as they revise their paragraphs: 1. Will the reader understand the role of this sentence in the context of its surrounding sentences? 2. Do transitional words connecting this sentence to its surrounding sentences accurately convey this role? 3. Is the role of this sentence useful to the work of the entire paragraph or is it unnecessary? (54)

Lord, John. "Theme and Thesis." Writing Exercises from Exercise Exchange. Ed. Littleton Long. Urbana, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1976, pp. 43-44. High school and college level, Warner's theory. Gives sample exercise to teach students the distinction between theme (subject area) and thesis (arguable idea about the theme) in papers which argue a point (44).

McCrimmon, James. "A Cumulative Sequence in Composition." Rpt. in Rhetoric and Composition: A Sourcebook for Teachers. Ed. Richard Graves. Rochelle Park, N.J.: Hayden Book Company, Inc., 1976. Elementary level, Larson's theory. Recommends that students copy paragraphs, number the sentences, identify the topic sentence, and define relationship of each other sentence to the topic sentence (230). Also suggests teaching paragraph structure by assigning topics that naturally fall into units of thought (comparison-contrast topics, classification topics), with each unit to become a paragraph.

Meade, Richard, and Beiger Ellis. "Paragraph Development in the Modern Age of Rhetoric." Rpt. in Rhetoric and Composition: A Sourcebook for Teachers. Ed. Richard Graves. Rochelle Park, N.J.: Hayden Book Co., Inc., 1976, pp. 193-200. All levels, Meade and Ellis's theory. Suggests that teachers emphasize developing paragraphs by examples, reasons, and additional comment instead of by facts, incidents, comparison, contrast, argument, and definition (199).

Obenchain, Anne. Links to Forceful Writing: Paragraph and Multi-Paragraph Power. Reston, Virginia: Validated Writing Systems, 1977. Tenth-grade literature and composition text, Warner's theory. A fully developed program of combining sentences according to sentence patterns to teach students to place main ideas in main clauses and supporting information in subordinate constructions. In an examination of four kinds of connectives (coordinating conjunctions, conjunctive adverbs, subordinate conjunctions, and relative pronouns) the student discovers the effects that each type has upon the ideas which it links. He can then link

ideas with connectives which will produce sentences that have appropriate emphasis, and in doing so he develops an understanding of sentence structure. Once he has learned to link subordinate and coordinate ideas logically in single sentences, he learns to combine sentences into paragraphs that have unity, coherence, and emphasis.

O'Hare, Frank. "From Sentence Combining: Improving Student Writing Without Formal Grammar Instruction. Rpt. in Children and Writing in the Elementary School: Theories and Techniques. Ed. Richard Larson. New York: Oxford University Press, 1975, pp. 346-360. All grade levels, Wendell's theory. Recommends sentence combining to teach students to manipulate syntax and create different sentence structures. Knowing the many structures that are their options, students can select the ones that will provide effective paragraph unity, coherence, and emphasis.

Ostrom, John. Better Paragraphs. San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co., 1961. High school level text, Warner's theory. Presents a formulaic system for writing a unified paragraph with a topic sentence containing a thesis that is supported by a series of major supports, which are in turn enlarged upon by minor supporting statements. Explanation and exercises in coordination, subordination, methods of development (detail, illustration, reason), connectives, and order of details (time, space, general-to-specific, specific-to-general, climax).

Payne, Lucile Vaughan. The Lively Art of Writing. Chicago: Follett Publishing Co., 1975. High school level text, Warner's theory. Adapts Sheridan Baker's paragraph rules for high school students (see Baker, Sheridan, above).

Stern, Arthur. "When Is a Paragraph?" Rpt. in Composition and Its Teaching: Articles from College Composition and Communication During the Editorship of Edward P. J. Corbett. Ed. Richard Gebhardt. Ohio Council of Teachers of English Language Arts, 1979, pp. 109-113. All grade levels, Rodgers's theory. Argues for discourse-centered composition curriculum in which students focus on what they have to say and allow the paragraph to be shaped by the flow of the argument through the entire essay (113).

Strong, William. Sentence Combining: A Composing Book. New York: Random House, 1973. Elementary and high school text, Miles's theory. Uses intuitive (open) and patterned (signaled) sentence-combining exercises to compose paragraphs which lead students to an awareness of the stylistic options available to them. Instructor's manual includes transparency masters.

Strong, William. Sentence Combining and Paragraph Building. New York: Random House, 1981. High school text, Warner's theory. Uses open and signaled sentence-combining exercises to compose paragraphs, focusing on unity, coherence, and emphasis. Unit 7 (153-172) uses Christensen's diagrams to teach coordination and subordination. Assignments ask students to apply the skills in writing their original paragraphs.

Stronks, James. "Coherence in the Paragraph." Writing Exercises from Exercise Exchange. Ed. Littleton Long. Urbana, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1976, pp. 48-51. All grade levels, Wendell's theory. Suggests strategy for teaching paragraph coherence: cut apart sentences from a published paragraph, add an extraneous sentence, instruct students to reassemble the sentences into a coherent paragraph and defend their choice of sentence order. Includes a sample (pp. 49-50).

Trosky, O. S., and C. C. Wood. "Nobody Writes a 'Paragraph.'" Rpt. in Children Writing in the Elementary School: Theories and Techniques. Ed. Richard Larson. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1975, pp. 319-325. Elementary level, Lathrop's theory. To teach students that

paragraphs are units of thought within a larger discourse, involve the class in a discussion of an interesting topic and ask them to: (1) list their ideas, (2) group the ideas (each group will become a paragraph), (3) name each group of ideas, (4) number the ideas in each group according to a logical sequence, (5) order the groups, and (6) write about the ideas in each group (324).

As public and common as expository paragraphs are, it is ironic that they have been the subject of great amounts of attention among scholars, apprehension among students, and just plain tension among writers of research papers. And it is doubly ironic that, even though there exists not a single definition, based on either content or form, that describes the structure of all expository paragraphs, writers have to understand them well enough to compose paragraphs that will effectively communicate their intended meaning to their audience. Today's students are among those writers, and today's teachers are partly responsible for helping them learn to write effectively structured paragraphs. To neglect this duty is to open oneself to unimagined consequences.

There is a lesson to be learned from one person's experience with a similar structure, the narrative paragraph, which may be considerably more simple than its expository cousin--as simple as a single sentence--a single word--indeed, as a single letter:

> A harmless soul trudged wearily to the Pearly Gates, and mustering the last small bit of strength, slowly raised an ink-stained hand and tapped once, very faintly.
> "Who's there?" called St. Peter.
> "I."
> "Go away!" shouted St. Peter. "We don't want any more English teachers up here!"

If a simple one-letter paragraph in spoken discourse can have such a profound consequence for the user who means well but just does not know how to use it to serve his intended purpose, it is imperative that teachers understand the more complicated written paragraph as it is illuminated by the various theories. Only then can they select the teaching strategies that will enable their students to develop into skillful writers of expository paragraphs.

Using Field Work to Teach Writing

Cheryl Treadway

A student once asked Ernest Hemingway if writing was difficult. "Not at all," was his reply. "All you need is a perfect ear, absolute pitch, the devotion to your work that a priest of God has for his, the guts of a burgler, no conscience except to writing, and you're in" (Hotchner, 1966).

Too often I think our students feel they need these same qualifications before they are able to write anything that the teacher will accept. Not having the "perfect ear, absolute pitch, and devotion like that of a priest," our students often feel failure before they even put their pen to the paper. It is our job as teachers to eliminate this fear of failing by motivating them and encouraging them in their writing so that they will be able to achieve success.

The field work and classroom publishing technique is one method of motivating students. As stated in the Wisconsin Writing Project's Guide to Using the Field Work Technique to Teach Writing, "the students are writing because they have something to say, based on their discoveries and someone important to write it for--an interested audience" (1979, p. 1). The Guide further defines the field work technique as a "carefully planned and well organized study which uses the students' community itself as raw material and whose audience motivates writing that is fresh and original, not the digestion of the Encyclopedia Brittanica some teachers complain they receive' (p. 1). In the field work approach to writing, the students research their topic by interviewing people and recording their results in some type of newspaper, magazine, book, or booklet. In this way, the students are able to see each other's work and members of the community are made a part of a school project. A more complete definition of what the field work approach is and is not can be found in Appendix A.

The concept of studying and recording community customs is not new. But it was not until Eliot Wigginton (1968) and his Foxfire magazines and books became successful that it was recognized as a classroom teaching device. In 1966, after battling with his ninth and tenth grade students the first six weeks of the school year, Wigginton came up with the idea of starting a magazine. The contents of the magazine were to be the stories, legends, superstitions, and knowledge that the students could gather from the older people of the community. In the process, the students gained valuable, unique knowledge about their Appalachian roots (pp. 9-13). That single magazine put together by the class, during class time, financed by whatever ways the students could find the money, grew into Foxfire magazine with subscribers in all fifty states and a dozen countries. Some of the contents of those magazines have subsequently been put together into The Foxfire Book. As of this date six volumes have been produced and the first two volumes have sold over a million copies.

The success of Eliot Wigginton's Foxfire has been duplicated by teachers across the country who have initiated their own "Foxfire" magazines (see Appendix B). Especially in areas where there is low student motivation to finish school or even attend regularly, these student publications have experienced such educational and financial success that even those skeptics inclined to label fieldwork as "overstimulating" are forced to reconsider what students feel is important to write about and what stimulates them to produce work that is exciting, refreshing, and original (Smelstor, p. 5).

James Moffett (1973) agrees that "the invitation to put fresh experiences into words" seems to bring students "back to life":

> Never having climbed very high on the abstraction ladder, unmotivated to write about books and remote topics, they

> like to observe, live close to concrete things, and can find some pleasure in verbalizing these things. Once interested, they can consider the conceptual and technical matters of shaping their material through revision. (p. 414)

Moffett suggests beginning fieldwork techniques by having students make "observational visits" and write about places they are familiar with, e.g., where a student works, goes to church. He then suggests they do interviews where the subject is more abstract and second-hand and the person becomes as important as the place.

In a booklet entitled "Workshop Handouts on Classroom Publishing Projects," Marian Mohr (1980) details her own work in initiating a Foxfire-type experience. She explains that "writing is a process of discovering identity, both individual and communal. Family folklore and oral history provide the developing writer with directly accessible material for making these discoveries." According to Mohr, less-experienced writers such as students need the opportunity to practice their writing on material they find interesting and important (p. 34).

Besides the actual writing, other skills are learned from the field work experience. Through interviewing, students develop better listening skills. They learn to have an appreciation for others and respect for age and position. They gain a knowledge of community and a responsibility to it. Students improve their writing skills by working through the composition process of prewriting, writing, and revision or postwriting. They must perfect their language mechanics of grammar, sentence structure, spelling, and punctuation. In the publishing process they learn lay-out, make-up, correspondence, art and cover design as well as the related skills of fund raising, typing, retailing, and advertising. More is learned about English in this project than almost any other curriculum that could be devised. The learning that takes place is through actual participation, which Piaget says is the best way to learn. Ginsburg and Opper (1975) tell us that "Perhaps the most important single proposition that the educator can derive from Piaget's work, and thus use in the classroom, is that children, especially young ones, learn best from concrete activities." And, as Mohr relates, fieldwork activities are concrete:

> When students know that what they are writing will be read, used and appreciated by others, they will learn and be willing to revise and edit with care. Publishing the results of their writing process provides them with an end result to be proud of and a recognition of the power of writing. They have also created something of their own to return to the community. (p. 33)

Teachers grading student field work writing must take into consideration that the reader of the publication ultimately evaluates the writing. Since the students know that their work will be for others to read, they are usually much more careful with it. The teacher becomes an aid in the final process. Marian Mohr grades her family folklore interviews in two ways. First, the students receive credits for accomplishing the various parts of the assignment. Second, the students receive a grade on the final draft based on the amount and quality of the revision evident on the drafts and reflected in the final version. She does give extra credit for extra drafts with revisions. Writing objectives should be discussed at the beginning of the project so that the students will understand the criteria for evaluation, because it is assumed that each individual teacher evaluates differently.

Suggestions for Field Work Topics

Elementary

1. The Incredible, Edible Apple

Goal: To publish an apple cookbook entitled "The Incredible, Edible Apple"
Purpose: Each student will interview someone in his or her immediate family for the purpose of getting an apple recipe and additional anecdotal information.

2. Occupational Interviews
Goal: To publish a Career Guide for IMC
Purpose: To interview a person in the community and then write three paragraphs that include a job description, advantages and disadvantages of the job, and opinion on the desirability of the job.

3. Long-Term Fieldwork Project for Upper Elementary Schools
Goal: Publish a guide to the business district of a specific locality.
Purpose: To write an ad taking all aspects of the written ad into consideration.

Middle School

1. Career Search
Goal: To separate fact from opinion; to take notes and organize material; to investigate through the interview technique; to learn more about careers of interest.
Purpose: To write a student career guide.

2. Investigation of People Dealing with Energy
Goal: To investigate the role of energy in the student's community; to learn the process of fieldwork; to realize the complexities of the energy problem in the student's community.
Purpose: For the students to understand the energy situation in their community.

High School

1. Guide for Incoming Freshmen
Goal: Produce an informal "Guide for Incoming Freshmen" written by freshmen to distribute to 8th graders.
Purpose: To give students a chance to:
- write for a specific audience
- take responsibility for helping other students achieve success in high school
- learn interview techniques
- think critically about their own experiences.

2. Write a History of Your Community
Goal: To write a regional/cultural history of your community.
Purpose: Building an awareness of your regional/cultural heritage.

Additional Field Work Type Writing Activities

1. Find resource people who can give background on historical buildings and/or historical markers in your area.
2. Interview nursing home residents for "how it used to be"; write historical accounts, feature articles, stories, dramatizations.
3. Have students attend City Council meetings, take notes, write up minutes, or prepare news story for the newspaper.
4. Use parents as discussion sources. Explore the differences between adult and teen culture. Write a comparison paper, etc.
5. Write a community history after conducting research and investigation. Bring older resident who has been a member of the community

for a long time to school to share with the class and act as a primary source.

6. Through investigation and interviewing, do a "Person of the Year" from your community. Write feature articles and publish in the local paper.
7. The students conduct interviews with older members of their families. They take notes during the interview and write, revise, and edit the stories that they are told. They produce a small booklet of family folklore to share with other students and with their own families.
8. Find out about local superstitions. See if there is a relationship between old and new superstitions. Are new superstitions just variations of the old ones?
9. Find out about home-made cures. Most people carry with them certain folk notions about medical treatment. Find out what they are.
10. Find out about favorite foods and family recipes. Are certain foods traditional for special events?
11. Where did the names and nicknames come from? Who names the child in the family? How did the nicknames originate?

(Some of these suggestions were taken from The Wisconsin Writing Project's Using the Field Work Technique to Teach Writing)

APPENDIX A

The Fieldwork Approach--A Definition

The Fieldwork Approach to writing is:

- -- a first-hand experience to motivate students to want to write
- -- many options to keep students interested in writing
- -- an opportunity to individualize writing
- -- a time to do primary research and write original material
- -- information gathered using all of the senses
- -- a reason to question, write, revise, and rewrite
- -- a written product prepared for a specific audience
- -- an opportunity to use skills learned in the classroom in real-life situations
- -- allowing students to see the importance of learning outside the classroom
- -- an opportunity to work cooperatively on a group project
- -- an on-going process of developing human relationships
- -- interaction between the student and his community
- -- an opportunity to discover their own role in the community
- -- an appreciation of people and places in the community

The Fieldwork Approach to writing is not:

- -- an end in itself
- -- an excuse to get out of the classroom
- -- something that can be done hastily
- -- unstructured

-- just a field trip

(Taken from the Wisconsin Writing Project 1979--A Guide to Using the Field Work Technique to Teach Writing.)

APPENDIX B

Teachers across the country have been duplicating the Foxfire concept with their own students by producing magazines about their own distinct cultures:

FOXFIRE: A quarterly from the southern Appalachians of Georgia containing articles on mountain crafts and foods, planting by the signs, log cabin building, faith healing, wagon making, weather signs, and more affairs of plain living.
Subscription: $6.00/four issues
FOXFIRE, Rabun Gap, Georgia 30568

SKIPJACK: A quarterly from the Eastern Shore of Maryland containing articles on watermen and local folkways, including interviews with Skipjack captains and their wives, muskrat trapping, crab and eel pot construction, oyster recipes, and much more.
Subscription: $5.00/four issues
SKIPJACK, South Dorchester High School, Church Creek, Maryland 21622

SEA CHEST: A quarterly from the Outer Banks of North Carolina containing articles on lighthouses and lighthouse keepers, storms, and shipwrecks, smoking fish, and making yaupon tea.
Subscription: $5.50/three issues
SEA CHEST, Cape Hatteras High School, Box 278, Buxton, North Carolina 27920

DOVETAIL: A quarterly published by Indian and white students on the Flathead Reservation in Montana containing articles on stagecoaches, trading posts, hide tanning, Indian language and legends, handmade dolls, root cellars, et al.
Subscription: $12.00/four issues
DOVETAIL, Ronan High School, Ronan, Montana 59864

BITTERSWEET: A quarterly published in the Ozarks of Missouri containing articles on Ozark johnboats, making and playing the mountain dulcimer, bluegrass music, and photo essays.
Subscription: $6.00/four issues
BITTERSWEET, Lebanon High School, Lebanon, Missouri 65536

NANIH WAIYA: A quarterly published by Mississippi Choctaws containing articles on basket weaving, rabbit and kabucha sticks, hominy making, stickball, blow-gun construction, and the annual Choctaw Indian Fair.
Subscription: $8.00/four issues
NANIH WAIYA, Choctaw Central, Route 7, Box 72, Philadelphia, Mississippi 39350

KIL-KAAS-GIT: A quarterly to be published by Alaskan native young people containing articles on the traditional culture of Pacific coastal tribes including halibut hook carving, smoking fish, and canoe and totem carving.
Subscription: $6.00/four issues
KIL-KAAS-GIT, Prince of Wales High School, Craig, Alaska 99921

APPENDIX C

Interview Techniques

1. Set up interview in person. This allows the people to realize you are serious.

2. Ask questions naturally. Be familiar with your material.
3. Be sure of your equipment. Check tape recorder or pen to make sure it works!
4. Find out as much as possible about the subject before you go out on the interview.
5. Don't overwhelm the person with equipment in the first moments of the interview. Ease into the use of the recorder. If necessary, don't even start it up.
6. Bring a clipboard and paper to take notes. Make notes on the surroundings.
7. Ask permission to tape the interview and to take photos.
8. Don't stick to notes. Use your own curiosity.
9. Let the person talk about what he/she wants.
10. Use publication release slips. (These provide written permission for publication.)
11. Repay the people with kindness for taking the time to talk. Research shows that small groups of two or three do well in interview situations. This allows the tasks to be divided, so one can manage the tape recorder or take notes, someone can take photographs, and one leads the interview. However, everyone asks questions!

(Taken from the Wisconsin Writing Project 1979--A Guide to Using the Fieldwork Technique to Teach Writing.)

APPENDIX D

Sample Interview Questions

1. What were times like when you were a child?
   -- How did you and your family live?
   -- Were times better, or worse? Why?
   -- What is your most vivid memory?
2. What types of things did you do as a child?
   -- What did you like to do most? Why?
3. How did your parents treat you?
   -- What did they do with you that you remember best?
   -- What times with them were the most enjoyable to you? Why?
   -- What was most enjoyable about your youth?
4. What advice or training did your parents give you that has helped you to lead a better, fuller life?
   -- What examples did they set for you?
   -- How did you profit from them?
   -- Do you feel your parents prepared you well for life?
5. As a teenager did your parents let you socialize with boys/girls?
   -- Did you have "dates" as we call them now?
   -- Where would you go when you went out?
6. What was it like when you first went out on your own?
   -- Were times hard?
   -- Did you marry?
7. What kind of work did you do to support yourself?
   -- Was it difficult?
   -- What did it mean to you?
8. How did you feel about living in the country?
   -- How about the city?
   -- Which do you like best? Why?

9. Do you feel there is a difference between country people and city people?
   -- If so, what is it, what makes it so?

10. How big a part has religion played in your life?
    -- What are your feelings on it?
    -- Do you read the Bible? Should everyone?
    -- What is your proof for your belief in God?
    -- How has He shown Himself to you?

11. How do you feel about life in general today?
    -- How different is it from the way it used to be?
    -- Is the quality of life better or worse now?

12. Are people different from what they used to be?
    -- In what ways?
    -- Are these changes good or bad?

13. How do you feel about the youth of today?
    -- Are the teenagers different now from the way you and your friends were?
    -- What has caused these changes?

14. What do you think of the direction our country is going today?
    -- Is America being run well, or badly?

15. What do you consider to be the most valuable possession you have ever had? (Something you could not have done without in your lifetime.) Why?

16. Have you done everything in your life you wanted or planned to?
    -- If not, what were you not able to do?

17. If you could go back and live your life over, what would you change?

18. How do you feel about:
    -- money?
    -- friendship?
    -- kindness?
    -- honesty?

19. What do you consider to be vices, or faults in people?
    -- Why are these things bad?
    -- How can they be overcome?

20. What advice could you give young people which would help them to lead better lives?
    -- What experiences have you had that they could benefit from?

(Taken from Foxfire's Sample Personality Questions.)

APPENDIX E

The Snake Hill to Spring Bank project and other classroom publishing projects can be incorporated into a broad range of presentations. Listed below are some of the topics suggested by teachers who have already seen the program.

1. Classroom Publishing Projects
2. Writing Down Folklore and Oral History
3. Involving Parents and the Community in Student Writing Projects
4. Interviewing as the Basis for Writing
5. The Relationship Between Spoken and Written Language
6. The Full Writing Process
7. Writing with a Purpose. Writing for an Audience
8. Teaching Writing Skills Through the Writing Process
9. Encouraging Revision and Editing
10. Writing Across the Curriculum (Social Studies)
11. Student Controlled Revision and Editing

12. The Interrelationship of English Objectives (Listening, Speaking, Language Study, Multi-Media, Writing) in a Classroom Project
13. Teaching Style and Student Behavior
14. Exploring Human Relations Through Writing
15. Teaching the Apprehensive Writer
16. Ethnic Speech and Writing (Black English, etc.)
17. Conferencing
18. Using Peer Groups
19. Encouraging Fluency
20. Using Oral Interpretation to Encourage Writing

(From Marian Mohr's Workshop Handouts on Classroom Publishing Projects.)

Using Prewriting to Improve Student Writing

Muriel L. Quammen

Setting: The English teacher's classroom, sixth period of the day.

Teacher: Today, students, I'd like you to address your writing to the subject of freedom. We've been studying the literature from the American Revolution, and we've seen how important freedom was to the Colonists. Now I'd like to know your feelings about freedom. Be sure to provide an introduction and a conclusion along with several paragraphs of support. Please complete this assignment and have it ready to hand in by the end of the period.

Silence.

Then, pens begin gliding across the pages. Thirty minutes later, Johnny approaches the teacher.

Johnny: Do you want my composition now?

Teacher: Are you finished already? You still have twenty minutes. Don't you think you can improve this?

Johnny: Nah, that's the best I can do. I can't think of anything else to write.

The other students devote a little more time to the subject, but all are finished by the end of the period.

That night the teacher settled down to another set of boring compositions. What happened? As this teacher made the assignment, she was thinking of when she was a teenager and her brothers were given more freedom than she because, as her mother said, "You're younger, and, besides, they're boys." What a great way to begin a discussion of freedom! Why, then, were the students' papers filled with general references to the basic freedoms guaranteed to each American citizen? Why weren't they able to use specific examples from their own experience? Maybe because the teacher emphasized the writing product rather than the writing process.

This teacher may have saved herself the boredom of grading twenty-five dismal attempts at discussing freedom had she paid more attention to what writers have to do before they write. As Donald M. Murray (1978c) states, "Writing teachers . . . should give careful attention to what happens between the moment the writer receives an idea or an assignment and the moment the first completed draft is begun" (p. 375).

Authorities in the field of writing agree that writers must have something to say before they can write effectively. The question is how can we help our students find something to say? How can we help them discover a topic?

One way to teach discovery is through prewriting techniques that provoke introspection and reflection. Richard Gebhardt (1977) suggests talking out ideas, making lists, using rapid writing, and questioning key ideas (pp. 30-31). Peter M. Schiff (1979) recommends "physical activity that allows [students] to observe the things about which they will write" (pp. 753-754). These physical activities could be field trips to museums or to farms, neighborhood walks, or examination of objects. Irmscher (1979) suggests class discussions and journals, and Cunningham (1978) brainstorming. Any form of prewriting may provoke this stimulation to write: Petrosky and Brozick (1979) cite Macrorie's use of small and large ". . . group discussions, reflection, dramatics, brainstorming, media, research and reading"

(p. 99) as forms of prewriting; Burns and Culp (1980) use computer-assisted instruction to motivate students to write (pp. 5-10); Calkins' (1979) premise is that just writing and producing "an excess of raw materials" (p. 749) allows her young students to discover what they want to say. All of these prewriting activities emphasize that by "collecting and processing subject matter . . . before translating their ideas into the written word, students can begin writing with a purpose, a plan, and something significant to write about for a specific audience" (Beyer, 1979, p. 187). Out of prewriting, therefore, comes understanding.

Free writing, one of the most effective forms of prewriting, is a means of encouraging students to put pen to paper. I tell my students that free writing, à la Elbow (1973), can help them to become better writers. When I assign free writing, I give my students a topic and ask them to write on the subject for three minutes, following Donald Murray's suggestions that they write steadily during the time, not stopping to think. If they find that they go blank during the three minutes, they write the word "nothing" until they are ready to begin writing again. The purpose of these rules is to get the students to put "anything down to get the pencil moving" (Hillerich, 1979, p. 773).

Although you can have students generate their own topic, I usually prefer to structure the content and provide a broad, general suggestion, often related to the literature, upon which the students can develop their thoughts in single words, phrases, or sentences--whatever form they prefer. Usually, I provide them with a single word (e.g., bigot, fire, war, river, dream, journey, rehearsal, guilt, pain, hesitation, hostility, treason, revenge). At the end of the three minutes, students may share their work with the class; the class discussion tends to be much more animated as we use the class contributions to investigate the meaning of the word in the literature. The free writing exercise and class discussion then may be used as a basis for a formal composition.

I also use Murray's (1980) technique, with adaptations, of writing on colored index cards (p. 14). The 3 x 5 cards prevent students from complaining that they don't have anything to say--anyone can fill up the two sides of a 3 x 5 index card. I begin by asking the students to use the blue card and free write on the subject of a small place about which they have strong feelings (positive or negative); an example could be a kitchen or a classroom or a cave. After sharing the ideas the students have written on the blue card, we use a yellow card and again free write, this time by zooming in on a much smaller portion of this place--for example, an area not bigger than a square foot. The green card may be used to describe (this time in complete sentences) the feelings the writer has about this place by re-creating that feeling in the reader. A dialogue between the writer and one other person in that setting can be created on the orange card, and the pink card may be written from the point of view of the other person as he/she views the writer in this setting. Finally, the white card is used to revise the best (student's choice) of the preceding cards. These then are shared with the class. The benefits of this exercise are manifold:

1. Students choose the place they want to describe and, thus, have an inherent interest in the subject.
2. Students practice description of a specific portion of this place.
3. Students show emotions rather than telling of them, specifically on the green card.
4. Students gain practice in creating dialogue.
5. Students become aware of the possibility of creating a different voice in their writing.
6. Students get to choose their best work to revise and shape to share with the class.

This exercise may then be extended to a full composition.

Another prewriting exercise in my classroom makes use of many large pictures of anonymous people that I have gathered over the years from magazines. A fellow teacher and I compiled the following list of questions which students answer, in complete sentences, after choosing a picture:

1. What color would you associate with this person? Why? (Student response: Grief and somber feelings dominate in this picture, so I would choose grey to go with these feelings.)
2. Assuming this person was greeted by someone of ultimate power and granted one wish, what would that wish be? (Student response: She would wish to return in time to the preceding day. Possibly the accident could have been avoided.)
3. Use three adjectives to describe this person's lips. (Student response: His lips, taut and cracked, twisted as he smiled.)
4. Name one item which this person is likely to have in his pocket. Why did you choose this item? (Student response: Because he wants to prepare himself for success, this man has his registration for evening college in his pocket.)
5. Choose an inanimate object which, if pressed, you could personify into this character. (Student response: This man reminds me of a stuffed doll you might find at a craft fair where the creator uses bright, gaudy material to catch children's eyes.)
6. Of which animal does this person remind you? Why? (Student response: He reminds me of a turtle. His neck is withered and strained. I can see him as having a destination in mind, but he is moving slowly.)
7. What noise would you associate with this person? Why? (Student response: The old man is a farmer so I would associate the sound of a hoe cutting into the rich soil and, every once in a while, hitting a stone in the ground, making a clink.)
8. What smell would you associate with this person? Why? (Student response: This person smells of the make-up on his face, liquor on his breath, and an old, musty costume that has been hanging in the closet with mothballs.)
9. Analyze the appropriateness of the color or lack of color in the photograph. (Student response: The colors are extremely appropriate because the colorful crowd contrast with the somber appearance of the woman.)
10. Use three adjectives to describe the texture of this person. (Student response: Her dry, flaky skin stretched toward her scaly ears.)
11. Comment in some way on the person's eyebrows. (Consider using a simile or metaphor here.) (Student response: His eyebrows are surrounded by age wrinkles and hang over his eyes like a precipice.)
12. Use a word which is "above" your normal speaking--or writing--vocabulary and use it to describe some aspect of this person. (Student response: The animated expression on the woman's face indicates that she is gregarious.)
13. In a simile or metaphor, compare this person to a fruit or vegetable. (Student response: He has a tough appearance on his exterior but is very soft and emotional inside; therefore, he is like a coconut--he has a tough outer shell but is soft inside.)
14. Use three adjectives or adverbs to describe this person's voice. (Student response: The lilting soprano voice rang crisply from her lips.)

Such student responses are certainly a cut above the usual student attempts at description. Prewriting gives them ideas with which to begin writing imaginatively. This particular exercise allows students to choose only the best of their ideas to create an imaginative character sketch of someone whom they now feel they "know."

A similar exercise may be used with pictures showing only a portion of a person's body (e.g., the eye, the nose, the forehead, the hand). In this

instance, students could be asked to "create" the whole from a part--first in freewriting, later in a more formal manner.

Also, you might use a setting as a subject for prewriting. Questions could include:

1. What type of person would you place in this setting? Why?
2. Describe a typical day's activity in this setting.
3. If you could redecorate this room what would you change? Why?
4. Whom would you want with you if you were in this place? Why?
5. Choose a symbol which seems appropriate to this setting and explain your choice.

And you can easily extend the list, or you can ask students to develop a formal description of this setting or use similar questions in creating a setting of their own.

Prewriting activities can produce poetry. I recently asked my students to freewrite about the last time they began a family trip or outing in the early morning hours. After they had written for several minutes, I asked them to read over what they had written, list the best descriptions they had used, and add to the list. Then I directed them to arrange the ideas into chronological order. Next, they went through each line to improve word choices and tighten the phrasing. Finally, they wrote the result in a poetic form. Even the students who had no previous experience in writing poetry were quite pleased with their "poems." Here is one example:

Before Dawn

Blinking against harsh light at 4:00 a.m., I awaken to a
Conflict between drowsiness and excited anticipation.
My eyes adjust to darkness stabbed with needles of light.
Outside, a lone automobile growls in the distance
As lights seek the highway.
A magnified padding of footsteps sounds on the concrete.
Sssshhhhed voices caution me.
The clunking and scraping of luggage against car trunk
Stop as doors slam shut.
An angry lump of fur in the back seat refuses to purr.
He turns the key in the ignition, as I watch.

Lists can be used to enhance student awareness of their surroundings. Michael Paull (1974, p. 208) asked his students to "walk down a busy commercial street and write down twenty-five observations, in the form of sentences or phrases, which they thought characterized the street." The students then exchanged observations and discussed the difference between general and specific details. As students begin to understand how specific descriptions are able to evoke the desired feelings in the reader, they make use of that understanding in their formal writing assignments. Lists can also be used as the basis of any topic. Here are just a few topics that lists might be useful for:

1. You approve (disapprove) of strikes by government workers.
2. Boys should be required to enroll in home economics classes (girls in industrial arts classes).
3. Why one should (should not) go to college.
4. Why semester exams should (should not) be cumulative.
5. Welfare programs (work programs) should exist.
6. For maintaining (not maintaining) college sorority/fraternity houses.
7. Why grades are (are not) necessary.
8. Why you deserve (do not deserve) more freedom.

The listing technique is more structured than brainstorming and quickly provides students with a number of options to be used for a formal composition.

So often students don't support a thesis, simply because they have not searched adequately for supporting details. When forced to list ten supporting ideas, the students can throw away six or seven and retain three or four convincing ideas in a well-developed essay.

Although my experience with prewriting is limited to use with high-school students, each of these activities could be adapted to any level. Frequent use of prewriting exercises has a good chance of improving student writing. Whether you're teaching in grade school, secondary school, or college, it's worth a try.

Journal-Keeping: Classroom and Lifetime Activity

Mary Brosmer

My involvement with journal-keeping began in 1977 when I asked students in my first-ever Creative Writing class to keep a journal as a way of collecting experiences (at the time I called them "topics") to write about. I had never myself written in a journal, though I had often thought of doing it. So asking my students to keep a journal committed me to the task also, and I've been at it ever since. Being asked to do a presentation on The Journal at the 1981 Ohio Writing Project Institute was serendipitous for me. My first step was to collect and organize the many pages from the three or so journals I had been keeping over the years. I had used journal pieces before as the stuff of the poetry I love to write. But reading through the whole of my writings, I discovered motifs, symbols, scenes, conversations long forgotten which seemed to weave the fabric of my life. Preparing my presentation, and writing this article, I am amazed at the possibilities journal writing offers us as students, teachers, human beings. My initial and very narrow conception of the journal as a classroom tool has widened to include many ideas about its uses which I am pleased to share with students, teachers, friends.

A Description

The meanings of the word journal are as various as those who keep journals. According to Dorothy Lambert (1967), a journal is a record, "kept regularly, though not necessarily daily" (p. 286). What does the journal record? Very simply, it records life, the life of the journal writer. In my journal are images: faces seen on buses, my husband and son at the breakfast table; fragments of dreams and nightmares; memories: the annual family train ride to Mississippi; thoughts: about teaching, loving, parenting; reactions: to books and poems I have read, films and television shows I have seen, music I have listened to; lists: of things I'd rather be doing, things I should be doing, purple things, Monday things. In his journal workshops, Ira Progoff describes the journal as a place to record ". . . the underground stream of images and recollections within each of us. The stream is nothing more or less than an interior life" (Kaiser, 1981, p. 67). I like the concept of the journal as a workbook in which we work on our lives, discovering more than we knew was in us and preserving the discoveries for a time when we may need insights into the mystery of how we relate to the world. Dorothy Lambert gives what she calls a "shower of metaphors" which I find helpful in describing the journal to my students. Among other things, she compares the journal to a ". . . jewelry box, a storehouse, a collector's cabinet, a snapshot album, a laboratory, a wardrobe, a drafting board, a psychoanalyst's couch, a tape recorder, a history, a travelogue, a mystical exercise, a letter to oneself" (p. 286).

Theoretical Premises

I believe that journal-writing can be seen as a valid, productive activity in our classrooms against the background of much of the current theory on teaching composition. James Moffett (1965) argues for this order of assignments: "real and invented interior monologues, dramatic monologues, dialogues, plays, letters, diaries, fragments of autobiography, eye-witness accounts, reporters-at-large (modeled on those in The New Yorker), case studies, first and third person fiction, essays of generalization and essays of logical argument" (p. 247). Beginning with personal, I-centered writing is based on the research of Piaget which shows that speech is first egocentric, then becomes socialized. This movement from myself out to the world is natural in the development of human beings confronting the world and writers confronting problems to be solved. The journal is an ideal place for writers to confront themselves, explore their ideas, then move outward to writing which confronts and focuses on their worlds (Moffett).

Britton (1975) found that less than 4 percent of student writing is what he terms "expressive," writing as writing which gives indication of me: the way I think, feel. In such writing ". . . I declare the sort of person I am by the way I construe the world--by what I make of my encounters with people, events, ideas, works of art, fictions and all the rest" (p. 7). Britton deplores the lack of expressive writing done by students because he believes that such writing is the matrix from which other forms of writing take shape. For example, transactional writing is language which is called upon to achieve some transaction, get something done. Into this category fall many of the pieces of writing we have taught as expository writing: process, argument, comparison, contrast (pp. 9-10). Britton rightly questions how such writing can occur, or rather how it can contain any meaningful content if it has not been preceded by or pro-uced concomitantly with expressive writing in which the writer has discovered ideas, feelings, content to communicate. The other kind of writing we expect students to produce, Britton calls poetic. This he defines as "language consciously, deliberately shaped to perform for, please the reader or listener" (p. 11). This kind of writing (poem, short story, play) necessitates ideas and feelings which are to be shaped so as to please, engage the reader's attention and delight. Attempting poetic writing without the discovery of subject, voice, perspective through experience in expressive writing seems doomed to the production of fake, trite, teacher-pleasing poems and cutesy stories. Journal writing gives students regular experience in the expressive writing Britton describes as crucial to the creation of all other forms of writing.

Other current theory on composition deplores the emphasis on the product rather than the process. Janet Emig (1971), for instance, notes how little time students spend on the thinking, discovering (invention) part of the process and how much more time they spend on the product: arrangement, style, mechanics, etc. (p. 98). This, no doubt, reflects what Richard Young (1978) calls the Current Traditional Rhetoric, based on the premise that we cannot teach invention because it springs from the natural powers of the mind, and "either you have it or you don't" (p. 31). Invention, or what D. Gordon Rohman (1965) calls "the stage of discovery in the writing process," is defined as:

> that activity of the mind which brings forth and develops ideas plans, designs, not merely the entrance of an idea into one's mind; an active, not a passive enlistment in the cause of an idea; conceiving, which includes consecutive logical thinking but much more besides; essentially the imposition of pattern upon experience. (p. 106)

Like Young, Rohman says that current teaching methods train students to recognize an example of good prose (product), but do not teach students to produce good writing, in fact, make them realize their own inadequacies, the more minimizing the possibility of their writing well (p. 106).

The first method Rohman describes in his discussion of the Project English experiment designed to remedy some of the problems in traditional composition teaching is the use of the journal. The Project English experiment was begun by instructors asking students to "collect themselves" in a journal. Students were asked to write daily pieces of unspecified length and were given suggestions for journal entries. The purpose of the journal-keeping was to help students discover, through this introspective writing (Britton would call it expressive, Emig reflexive), their beliefs, feelings, ideas:

> In the process of introspection, formalized by the daily writing in the journal, we hoped to mobilize the consciousness of every student writer. If writing is a groping process for what it is in us that tallies with a subject, then the more familiar we are with ourselves, the better the chances of our groping to some discoveries in writing. (p. 109)

I think that the journal can be used on all grade levels to help students see all their writing as creative, personal, proceeding from this book of themselves, and taking on different forms in the finished product as purpose and audience dictate. The journal is a source book, a discovery device for later production of memos, research papers, etc., but preserves the sense of personal voice, conviction, and idea which are often stripped to meaningless by the separate production of "papers."

Specific Journal Uses

I have discovered that one of the greatest benefits of journal-writing is in shaping attitudes toward writing. The journal demonstrates to the students that writing can be meaningful, personal, and purposeful. This transforms writing from a dreaded, hand-cramping punishment ("I will not chew gum") to a welcomed opportunity for personal expression. I find journal-writing very helpful to the apprehensive writers because it allows them writing activities without the threat of critical examination and the subsequent "grade" which causes their apprehension. I also encourage students to use their journals to help them remedy writer's block. Many of us have extreme periods of anxiety about writing and these can prevent us from producing any work. I ask students to write in the journals--about why they can't write--about anything, to "prime the pump" and I find it helps get them through their writing slumps. Peter Elbow refers to this in Writing Without Teachers (1973). He writes about his "stuckpoints" just to remain fluent and to perhaps discover some way out. He writes about his "breakthroughs" to help him see how he found his way out (p. 18). A related attitude that I think journalizing fosters is that writing is a craft. Too often, students think whole novels float into the minds of writers and they effortlessly, dazzlingly WRITE. Students' journals provide raw materials. Through journals they learn that writers order, shape, polish just as potters and woodcrafters. I also use samples of professional writers' journals to show students work-in-progress.

Through my years of using the journal in the classroom, I have recognized other benefits in various areas of the writing process. Because the journal is a place to collect experience, information, and data for essays, poems, stories, and other written projects, it helps cure the "I don't have anything to write about" syndrome. I also find that journal assignments can help foster in students a sense of audience. Few, if any, of the journal pieces they write will be student-to-teacher writing. Therefore, students create audiences for their writing, and I encourage them to diversify: write a letter to yourself at age 30; write to a child you might someday have describing yourself now; write to your parents, a friend, employer, a person from another culture. I also find students who keep journals begin to consider revision more seriously. They seem more willing to revise pieces from their journals because they have written about experiences they care to shape into communications someone else will understand.

The journal is also a good place to cultivate the use of specifics in student writing. To develop imagery-sensitivity, students write what Monday smells like, a list of pleasant sounds, a list of tastes associated with summer, etc. These "imagery" writings result in final pieces which show with specific images, rather than tell. To encourage the use of specifics in transactional writing, a journal is a good place to list five arguments in favor of gun control, or ten characteristics of Romanticism, or reasons why I need a new bike. The journal encourages prewriting steps because it is presented from the beginning as a place to experiment, think, muse, and make mistakes.

In literature classes, I find journal writing an excellent way of deepening and extending students' responses to the readings. Sometimes I have them respond to a situation or theme in their journals which I know will be treated in the poem or story I plan to discuss. For example, I ask students to write in their journals (either at the beginning of class or the

night before) their ideas, feelings, and experiences related to death. The sharing of these writings (and it is very important to establish an atmosphere in which all responses are acknowledged and valued) sets up a very receptive audience for a poem such as "Because I Could Not Stop for Death," or, perhaps, stories such as "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall," or "Snows of Kilimanjaro." Sometimes, after a thorough discussion of a particular theme, such as initiation, I ask students to write in their journals, exploring their own growing up, their own initiation experiences. This is a way of helping students relate literary experiences to their lives, and, I hope, developing in them an attitude that literature can enrich and inform their lives.

Another literature-related use of the journal I have discovered helps resolve the age-old problem of interpretation. I have tried for years to find a way to show students an answer to the persistent question, "How can we even discuss literature if it means something different to everyone?" One successful technique toward answering that question is to have the class read a work (e.g., e.e. cumming's "in Just") and then free write any responses stirred by the poem into their journals. When students read their responses aloud, I point out that the diversity of responses is due to the fact that each of us brings a different set of experiences to the poem, and what happens between each of us and the poem is a unique, valid response. An example might be that one student follows the image of "puddle-wonderful" into an anecdote about falling into a puddle in her new birthday dress when she was four; another writes of a just-spring day when his father died. These responses are, however, personal and subjective, and, while valid, may not be firmly tied to the words that appear on the page. We can and do share and value these subjective responses to works which we have been collecting in our journals, but we can and must also discuss the meanings of the poem which all of us can observe and share (not all of us fell in a puddle in a birthday dress). I call this a more "objective" interpretation or discussion of the work. My students "buy" this approach. Their journals allow them to "see whatever they see" in the poem, and they are not as resentful about adding to their interpretation the responses elicited by a class discussion of the poem.

In using the journal as a vehicle for improving language skills, a teacher can also help educate the child in an even broader sense. For instance, Sidney Simon, Robert Hawley, and David Britton (1973) describe the journal as an effective vehicle of self-discovery, a Composition for Personal Growth program "to compose our inner selves, to find out who we are; to grow by the sharing of experience with others; to discover what we value; and to learn how to make our lives reflect our values" (p. 21). They believe traditional composition is geared toward superficial aims (correctness, etc.), all the while neglecting the depths and needs of children to discover and express themselves. Rennert (1975) reports that journal writing can become a popular and successful activity to stimulate values clarification: in his class, "the journal entry became a way to help students get at matters of personal concern, a method implementing the assumption that good writing is often the product of personal conviction, the intimate involvement of writer with subject matter" (p. 106).

I also have been pleased with the humanizing effect journal-keeping has had on my classes. Sharing journal entries is an excellent way for students to discover themselves, their classmates, and their teacher as human beings. (It is very important for building trust that I also write in my journal and share my work with my students.) The English classroom can be changed from just another sterile cubicle into a place where experience can be shared, explored, and questioned through language.

Grading

The personal and expressive nature of this kind of writing might indicate that no grading be done. I have found that, given the system under which most

of us work, some kind of grading is necessary for making students view their journal work seriously. One method of grading is to grade solely on the number of pages written (Phelon, 1975, p. 63). Another method is to assign a grade based on quantity and quality. Students may mark certain selections for me to read for quality and I may tell them I will choose some pieces randomly. I tell them to mark as "personal" anything they do not wish me to read, and I will not. One method of grading I used involved the student first evaluating his/her own journal in the areas of quality and quantity (I gave out a sheet with guidelines for evaluating both), then discussing his/her journal with me in a Journal Conference. We decided on a grade during the conference.

Practical Miscellany

There are a number of suggestions I would like to make under this heading. The first pertains to the appearance or format of the journal. I encourage students to choose a format they like and will find most practical. Some use small, log-type books, some use ledgers; I use, and find most practical, a looseleaf notebook. I tell students that journal entries may often be jotted on odd sheets of paper which can be easily added to a loose-leaf system. I ask students to label and date each entry. The label is useful to them when they are browsing for ideas and useful to me when I grade to see how many different topics they have chosen. The date is useful to them as they look back on their development as writers and persons.

Concerning journal topics, my policy is to put a journal suggestion on the board each day. A student may respond to this or any other topic or experience he/she may prefer for that day. As I mentioned earlier, I do give some "assignments" in the journal which relate to other class work, but I ask students to write to journal suggestions or their own preferences at least four times a week. Sometimes we write in class four times a week; at other times they may have one or two entries to write outside of class. I would prefer to have students write in their journals (and they seem to like to) every day for at least ten minutes, but I have only one composition-only class, and other activities vie for class time.

I have felt that journal writing has been the best thing I have done with my students. It is not meaningful to the same degree for all of them, but more of them value these books they have written than they do the themes and research papers I have assigned them. They find in their journals a record of themselves as human beings and as writers and they recognize the growth that takes place. They end the course with a product, a concrete object that is a testimony to the quality and amount of work they have done.

Avoiding Pretzel Prose: Christensen's Generative Rhetoric

Alexa Ann Lindquist

Consider the pretzel. Does it strike you as an effective model for writing? At first glance it might. Certainly it may be closer to the truth than the linear models most prevalent right now. Somehow it gives new meaning to Donald Murray's (1980) concept of writing as exploration, "rehearsing, drafting, revising," the intertwining, unending loops of the pretzel encouraging rethinking and redrafting.

Francis Christensen (1968), however, sees the pretzel as an ineffective model, a contorted, twisted, confusing structure. So his writing program is based on avoiding writing he calls "pretzel prose," unreadable jargon. Christensen says this jargon is created, usually, by a writer's use of "the long noun phrase as subject and the long noun phrase as complement, the two coupled by a minimal verb." For an example of such prose, consider this sentence: "One of the most striking features of plays in this genre [modern realistic drama] is the compromise between the events of everyday life and traditional forms of art" (Tibbetts, 1976, p. 146). Note how the two noun phrases make the two loops of the pretzel, the "is" creating the union in the middle. Christensen's Program, which emphasizes short base clauses and precisely stated free (nonrestrictive) modifiers, avoids "pretzel prose." His writing program, based on an analysis of professional prose, has four basic principles: addition, direction of movement, levels of generality, and texture.

The foundation of Christensen's program is the principle of addition, which he claims to have derived from John Erskine. He quotes Erskine for support:

> When you write, you make a point, not by subtracting as though you sharpened a pencil, but by adding. When you put one word after another, your statement should be more precise the more you add. If the result is otherwise, you have added the wrong thing, or you have added more thar was needed. (Christensen, 1976, p. 6)

For Christensen, then, the modifier is the essential part of any sentence.

Direction of movement or direction of modification is the second principle. This principle is based on the fact that writing, unlike speech, moves in linear space. So free modifiers can be added before or after the main clause of a sentence to produce what Christensen (1976) calls a cumulative sentence, a sentence type he finds prevails in professional writing. He defines the cumulative sentence thus:

> The main or base clause, which may or may not have sentence modifiers like this before or within it, advances the discussion or the narrative. The other additions, placed after it, move backward (as in this sentence), to modify the statement of the base clause or more often to explain it or add examples or details to it, so that the sentence has a flowing and ebbing movement, advancing to a new position and then pausing to consolidate it. In contrast to embedded or bound modifiers, we call those that are added and set off free modifiers. (p. 8)

These first two structural principles can be used to analyze larger units than sentences also--paragraphs, as well as groups of paragraphs.

Christensen also analyzes cumulative sentences into levels of generality. The main clause is the most general or abstract statement. The modifiers relate to that, and to themselves on different levels. Consider this

sentence cited by Christensen (1976) from The Grapes of Wrath:

1 Joad's lips stretched tight over his long teeth for a moment,
and
1 he licked his lips,
2 like a dog,
3 two licks,
4 one in each direction from the middle. (p. 9)

As the sentence progresses, the modifiers become more specific. They are on lower levels of generality, each one clarifying an image.

The fourth principle, texture, addresses style. Writing that frequently adds modifiers to nouns or verbs or clauses is considered rich in texture. Writing that adds few is considered thin, as is much student writing.

In essence, Christensen believes that before we tell our students how to write, we should analyze the prose of professional writers--who frequently use cumulative sentences, while school texts teach only simple, compound, and complex sentences. Christensen's analysis of professional prose, reported in "A Generative Rhetoric of the Sentence," and "A Generative Rhetoric of the Paragraph," grew into The Christensen Rhetoric Program (1968), a comprehensive program for high school students, although it has been used successfully at the college level. It teaches the free modifier, "the principle working unit of the professional writer" (p. vi).

Research indicates the Program is successful. Students write better. After studying it, students use more sentence modifiers and use them more effectively than students taught traditionally (Faigley, 1979; Brooks, 1975; Miller, 1973). Moreover, they generally acquire a more positive attitude toward writing. Faigley says, "Students claim an added sense of control and confidence in writing" due to the Program's manipulative approach to writing (p. 205).

Still, Christensen's program has its critics. Johnson (1969), for one, doubts Christensen's awesome generalization that learning to use a full range of free modifiers will make anyone a more skillful writer. As she concludes, "I suspect that Christensen, in seeking to remedy the errors inherent in the more traditional approaches to composition teaching, has presented his theories and his method in far more absolute terms than they warrant" (p. 165). Johnson also challenges Christensen's choice of descriptive and narrative examples to teach exposition.

Grady (1972), though, defends Christensen's method on three grounds: first, using a descriptive/narrative focus forces students to observe more carefully, to actually see more precisely. This follows Britton's preference that students start in the expressive mode, writing from the source a student knows best, himself; second, Grady says such writing motivates students to a greater degree; third, Grady indicates that Christensen's assumption as to the usefulness of the cumulative sentence is valid, most of the time (p. 860).

Grady also defends Christensen against Johnson's claim that he doesn't prepare students to transfer from narrative/descriptive to expository by pointing out that Christensen addresses the sentence structure of nonfiction writers in "A Generative Rhetoric of the Sentence."

If Christensen's Program is useful in a writing class, it may also benefit a reading class. Sternglass (1976) states that through the analytical techniques proposed by Christensen, "students could be brought to recognize and comprehend the different types of sentences that they will be exposed to in the reading that is required of them" (p. 398), thus increasing reading ability.

Christensen's generative rhetoric may also be used to teach poetry. Arnold Solkov (1970) advocates "instant poems" using a multilevel cumulative sentence, including a comparison as one of the levels. He offers this poem, part of a unit on A Separate Peace, as an example:

After strenuous drills at
the training camp,
The young boys rode off together, forming
A picture of conformity,
eyes with width and depth-like
Deep pools of water
Their bodies motionless in a very
cadaverous manner,
Their faces expressing the questioning
Thoughts of their minds in what
the future holds for them. (p. 836)

Where does all this leave the classroom teacher? It leaves me wanting to explore Christensen some more. I will accept Christensen's definition of mature style, one taken from professional writing in the "idiom of the day," and ask for such writing from my students. For research indicates that students who study Christensen Rhetoric make significant gains in writing ability.

Students like the Program, and I'm intrigued by it. If I am enthusiastic, I just may be able to motivate my students; since other students have liked the Program, my students may also. And with a little luck, it might be as successful for my students as for the students involved in the studies.

The manipulative approach to sentence construction appeals as much to me as I think it did Faigley's students. For the first time I will have a way to help students add meaning to their sentences, a formula with limitless possibilities. So I'm all for trying Christensen in my classroom, moderately, systematically. I'm all for trying to help students see their world more clearly by giving them a means to record it for further contemplation. Untying the pretzel may leave some extremely good prose.

Flash Grammar and the Writing Process

Mark Mortine

This is a Grammar Research News Update. This program is designed for the English teachers who like to be in the know and who like to keep up on the latest research in their field.

1962 FLASH:
R. J. Harris reports that groups of students studying formal grammar performed no better on an essay test than did the groups studying common composition errors without formal grammar instruction (Mellon, 1969, pp. 6-8).

1963 FLASH:
Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer (1963) complete an elaborate study of research on composition. They observe that in view of the widespread agreement of research studies based upon many types of students and teachers, the conclusion can be stated in strong and unqualified terms: "the teaching of formal grammar has a negligible or, because it usually displaces some instruction and practice in actual composition, even a harmful effect on the improvement of writing" (p. 37).

1964 FLASH:
D. R. Bateman and F. J. Zidonis (1966) indicate that students instructed in transformational grammar may write more complex sentences than those in a nongrammar class. [In 1977, Janice Neuleib says, however, that those students improved in the area of sentence development and that four students accounted for all the significant growth (p. 247).]

1969 FLASH:
John C. Mellon (1969), speaking about using formal grammar study to help students become better writers, says that the surest way to destroy the integrity of subject matter is to advertise and argue its value as an instrumentality to some immediate goal not integral to the subject itself. Tendencies in this direction have plagued conventional school grammar from its beginnings (p. 9).

1976 FLASH:
W. B. Elley told reporters that his study has led him and his research team to draw the following conclusions: (1) Probably only very bright students benefit from grammar instruction at all. (2) Learning alternate ways of expressing an idea probably has no effect on a writer because most children already have their repertoire of possible patterns within their linguistic competence before they are old enough to understand the abstractions of any grammar. (3) Grammar does not help a student in editing his or her own writing (Elley, Barham, Wyllie, 1976, p. 18).

Okay. So we are English teachers who want to use what has been proven to work. We agree that the traditional grammar texts don't help our students to become better writers. Exercises that require students to make choices like "There (was, were) too many people on the bus" won't assure that our students will make the correct choice in their own writing. We agree that texts by such writing experts as Ken Macrorie help students to better develop their abilities to <u>show</u> rather than <u>tell</u> in their writing. We can agree that grammar is indeed just a system which we have already developed by the time we are three years old. We agree that all grammar ". . . is nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, and these can be either words or phrases or clauses. Grammar is something we all do, so let's just study it for what it is and stop pretending that its study produces better writers" (Morenberg, 1980).

We have managed to think about what we've been doing to our students all these years with such red marks as "frag," "run-on," and "S-V agr." We feel some remorse and want to change our ways. But how? So traditional grammar study won't make our students better writers. What will, then? And what can we do when our colleagues, department heads, and administrators want us to use our Warriner's texts to still the public's cries of "Back to the basics"?

These questions have been bothering me ever since I started reading research by people like Janet Emig, Peter Elbow, Richard Larson, James Moffett, and the researchers in the "Grammar News Update" who have been telling me what my methods are doing to my students. My purpose for writing this paper is to show my colleagues the place for grammar in the writing process and to show how we can use our traditional grammar textbooks, if we have to, and still incorporate what the latest research proves to work in order to make our students better writers. I will also include some ideas and exercises that will help us to avoid impersonal textbook grammar drills.

An imaginary conversation that I had with Mr. Peter M. Schiff while I was reading his article "But They Make Me Use that Grammar Text!" in the English Journal was most helpful in showing me a practical way of using my Warriner's text and incorporating the instruction into the writing process.

Me: Hello, Pete. How's the research going?

Pete: Pretty well. How about you? What have you been doing this summer?

M: Well, I've been participating in a writing institute and reading lots of research on writing.

P: What have you learned?

M: I think the most interesting and useful thing I've learned is that writing is a process rather than a product. A writer goes through stages. First, he thinks about what he can say and he observes the world around him and formulates in his mind some things he might want to say. Then he should begin to write. He should write freely, letting his pen take over. After he has written everything down that he has in his mind, he can see what he had to say, look back over it and throw out what isn't necessary. Then he is ready to work on a final copy.

P: Do these stages have names?

M: Yes. Either Prewriting, Writing, and Rewriting, according to Gordon Rohman, or Pre-Vision, Vision, and Revision, according to Donald Murray.

P: It sounds like you have been learning something, then.

M: Oh yes! But there's still something that I haven't been able to answer satisfactorily for myself.

P: And what is that?

M: Well, you see, I am required to use a traditional grammar text at my school, and . . .

P: And you're concerned about how you can work grammar into the writing process after everyone's been telling you that it doesn't help students write better.

M: Hey, how did you know?

P: I've grappled with that question myself. I am required to use the traditional Warriner's text.

M: Me too! How do you deal with that?

P: Let me tell you what I've discovered.

M: Please do!

Mr. Schiff explained to me that the authors of the traditional grammar/usage texts have arranged their books' contents in roughly the reverse order of what many researchers would suggest is appropriate for teaching the writing process. Therefore, one way to adapt the text is to use it backwards.

P: Mark, did you realize that the last 40% of Warriner's English Grammar and Composition: Complete Course (1973) contains several ways of beginning the invention stage of the prewriting process?

M: No, what are they?

P: They are a chapter on effective oral discussion and debate, ideas for developing questions, suggestions for using the library, and sample dictionary entries.

M: Oh yeah. I never got that far before because I was too busy working on the grammar and usage sections. I remember leafing through the book in May, though, and seeing those topic headings.

My face turned red as I remembered what I had just learned from my research. Pete continued, understanding my embarrassment.

P: Towards the middle of the same text there are sections on letter writing and precis preparation--both he'pful ways for calling forth and ordering the ideas from which later writing can grow. Further forward is a chapter entitled "Expository Writing: The Whole Composition." With students' ideas awaiting expression, this chapter offers composers information on first drafts--the entry to the writing stage of composing.

M: This is great, Pete. I can't wait to share this with my colleagues. But, now, the crucial question. Where does grammar instruction come in, or does it come in at all?

P: Well, from here almost to the front of the text is a wealth of revision reminders. In reverse order these include: paragraph development; sentence revision; vocabulary choice; sentence variety; conciseness; awkward changes in subject and in verb forms; parallelism; modification; clear reference; coordination/subordination; fragments; run-ons; special forms of the various parts of speech; agreement; levels of usage. The necessary tools for postwriting revision and manuscript preparation are there.

M: So you're saying that grammar instruction comes in during the revision stage?

P: Well, certainly usage does. Then after handing in their work, students may be ready to learn some of the names for the linguistic structures they have been using. These names are at the front of the text.

M: Do your students take an interest in this part?

P: Most definitely! They are excited to learn the names of all the

types of sentences and parts of speech they've been using. They feel as if their writing is pretty sophisticated and they find that they don't make nearly the number of mistakes that the textbook illustrates.

M: This is truly an awakening for me. I thought I'd just have to hand out the Warriner's texts at the beginning of the year and tell my students just to keep them in their lockers and not tell anybody about it. Now I see that I can actually use the text. But what about the directions and the exercises in the usage sections? Aren't they still so dry and impersonal, and, let's face it, just downright boring?

P: That's true. They are. So I have my students rewrite the drills and allow them to use personal experience as subject matter.

I raised my eyebrows questioningly.

P: For example, many of my students are crazy about baseball and the Cincinnati Reds, so I might get a sentence like this from a student, illustrating the difference between "among" and "between," "My father, mother, two sisters, and I own two Red's season tickets among us."

M: That's fantastic!

P: Yes, and they can even expand their personal sentences into paragraphs.

I pondered the possibilities of such exercise rewording for my students. Mr. Schiff interrupted my thoughts.

P: Hey, you teach French, too, don't you?

M: Yes, that's what I do most of the day.

P: I think one of the most intriguing possibilities for rewording the grammar text comes from foreign languages. Pupils can translate parts of the text into languages they are studying in school. Students of Spanish, I know, find it surprising that their foreign language text requires the double negative (No tengo nada) that their English grammar text prohibits I don't have nothing.

M: I've got an example that students might find in French! Where Warriner's text says to use the nominative "I" after a linking verb (It is I), the French text says to use "moi" (C'est moi--It is me).

P: Yes, you've got the idea.

M: Please go on. Do you have any other suggestions on how to use Warriner's wisely?

P: Oh, yes. The electronic and mass media offer students means for bringing all of the language arts to bear upon grammar and usage study. Student audiotaping of small-group developed radio plays in all active voice (Godzilla Meets Mothra) and all passive voice (Mothra Is Met By Godzilla) versions does more to highlight the stylistic qualities of verb voice than any textbook caveat to avoid the "weak passive."

M: Students must enjoy doing such activities.

P: They do. And there is one other activity that I never thought anyone could enjoy, but my students have proven me wrong.

M: What is that?

P: Doing research of questions pertaining to the grammar text. They love it.

M: That's unbelievable!

P: But true! For example, have you ever wondered why "ghost" isn't spelled in the more logical way, "gost"?

M: No, I never questioned it. I just memorized it.

P: So did I. But through researching "ghost" in a text on the history of English, I believe it was by Robertson and Cassidy and published in 1954, my students discovered that some of the earliest printers of English were natives of Holland who applied Dutch conventions ("gh" vs. "g") to English spelling.

It was starting to get late, and Pete and I both had summer classes the next day. As I bade Pete good-night, he said to me,

P: You can see, Mark, that the ideas I have just explained offer students who must use such prescriptive grammar books the opportunity to observe, analyze, manipulate, and enjoy language (1980, pp. 23-25).

I could indeed see how the old Warriner's textbook might serve some useful purpose, at least until I could convince the administration to buy a new text!

My conversation with Peter Schiff opened my eyes to many possibilities of relating grammar to my students' writing. I discovered how and where to fit it into the writing process. I decided then to look for ideas other people had on the subject.

Referring to the question, "When do we teach grammar?" Harriet Ramsey Reeves (1975) theorizes that "perhaps elementary students are in a better position to benefit from the teaching of grammar after they have a functional command of writing and speaking skills" (pp. 1035-1036). She goes on to give some examples of how to teach grammar, remembering that students are often called upon to synthesize or generate sentences. She says that grammar instruction, then, "ought to be in a context of generating sentences and groups of related sentences rather than classifying already given sentences" (p. 1036).

Ms. Reeves illustrates the patterning technique for teaching nouns: 1. The boy is here. 2. It is a chair. Only a noun can be used where "boy" and "chair" are. Students could use any number of common overused nouns to replace "boy" in sentence one, but could also be asked to replace "boy" with a noun that gives a more colorful picture of the boy. "Lad," "stripling," or "youth" could replace "boy" without distorting or changing the meaning. This exercise would increase students' vocabulary and ability to recognize a noun (p. 1036).

Having students expand a kernel sentence (a sentence in its simplest form) can help them produce more complex, informative, and interesting sentences. For example, the kernel sentence, "John cried," could be expanded
N V
simply by adding information which answers the questions when, where, what, what kind, how, and why. "John cried at school (Where)"; "Poor (What kind), little John cried at school (Where)." If teachers want, they could identify these modifiers as "prepositional phrase"/"adverbial of place" and "adjectives," but it's not necessary (pp. 1037, 1038).

Finally, Reeves suggests varying syntax (word order) in a sentence to

help students achieve the ability to write more interesting sentences and stories. Students could practice stating sentences in as many ways as possible. For example,

> The rabbit ran under the log to hide from the dogs.
> Under the log ran the rabbit in order to hide from the dogs.
> To hide from the dogs, the rabbit ran under the log. (p. 1039)

This activity helps students to become adept at generating different sentence possibilities and to become more interesting story-tellers and writers.

Sentence combining also provides us a way to teach grammar and relate it to writing. Students can take a group of short simple sentences and combine them into one sentence using participial phrases, for example. With the following group of sentences,

1. Shells boomed.
2. The shells were artillery.
3. The booming was in the distance.
4. The shells shook the ground.
5. The shaking was slight. (Daiker, Kerek, Morenberg, 1979, p. 40)

students could produce a variety of sentences using participles or other structures. We can discuss the effectiveness of each possibility and even give its grammatical name, but again, this is not necessary.

What are some other activities that we can use to teach our students better writing and to work grammar in during the revision process? Wouldn't it be nice to find a guidebook of this type of activities? In fact, such a book does exist--A Guide to the Role of Grammar in Teaching Writing (Smelstor, 1978a). This book is divided into three sections: "Grammar Activities--Elementary School," "Grammar Activities--Middle School," and "Grammar Activities--High School." Here is a suggestion for elementary school:

> Focus on adjectives and adverbs--Have class concentrate and try to visualize an unembellished sentence (The dog crossed the road). When students are asked to describe what they see, they will discover that everyone has conjured up very different dogs and roads. It might be useful to put the children's ideas on the board and compare meanings. (p. 11)

Such an exercise helps the students see basic sentence structure. Students will be able to see the large number of possibilities and see the different images brought about by each choice. Here is a suggestion for middle school:

> For work with grammatical structures, have students use words from reading material and convert one part of speech to another.

NOUN	VERB	ADJ	ADV
courage			
	photograph		
		psychological	
			initially (p. 22)

This helps students see the four basic grammatical units at work and how words fit into those categories. We can discuss words that don't have a form for all four categories and try to figure out why a word does not have a form for the adverb column, for example. A high school activity follows:

> Choose a short passage from literature written in clearly non-standard English. Have students "translate" it, and examine the differences. Consider why the author chose to write as he/she did. (p. 33)

Example--

> I waked him up, and I reckoned it was going to be a grand surprise, but it warn't. He nearly cried, he was so glad, but he warn't surprised. He said he swum along behind me that night, and heard me yell every time, but dasn't answer, because he didn't want nobody to pick him up, and take him into slavery again. (Twain, p. 201)

With this exercise teachers can discuss Standard versus nonstandard English. When is one more effective than the other? We can ask the students to give examples of writing in which they would use nonstandard English and what effect it might create.

Clearly, there is hope for English teachers who are trying to decide whether to teach grammar or teach writing. We have seen that teaching traditional grammar does not enhance students' writing, nor does correcting papers strictly for grammar/usage errors. That's all right. We were tired of putting all those red marks down anyway. We can agree that grammar could be taught for its own sake, as a way of showing students how languages are structured and organized, and that grammar can help students when they're ready to learn a foreign language. We can also see that some grammar instruction can come in at the revision stage of the writing process. This really involves a minimum of instruction by us. The students either take care of it in response-editing groups or else they come to us with questions about how they can make their writing stronger through better grammar and usage. We can even throw in some terminology about what they've been using in their final papers, after they become fluent writers.

Peter Schiff says we can use our traditional grammar textbooks to teach students writing by starting from the back and working towards the front. Peter Elbow (1973) says to let the students write freely in the beginning and not pay attention to errors. He says to bring in error correction only when the students are ready to hand in their final draft and to let the correction be done in student response groups. Carolyn Boiarsky (1980), in talking about some Atlanta teachers, says that, "Instead of spending time on exercises from grammar books, they are deriving lessons in grammar from the students' own writing so that the students can see an immediate connection between an abstract rule and its practical application" (pp. 39-41). William Irmscher (1979) says that students will come to us with questions of how they can make what they want to say more clear and more powerful. I say, "Hallelujah! Let the school year begin so I can apply this newly found knowledge to my students' writing and spend a lot less money on red ink pens!"

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